

**AN INVESTIGATION OF DOMESTIC WORKERS'  
PERCEPTIONS INTO THE EFFECTS OF EMPLOYER  
INVOLVEMENT ON PARENTING AND PARENTAL  
AUTONOMY**

**BY**

**RUCKSANA CHRISTIAN**

**A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology.**

**SUPERVISED**

**BY**

**LESLIE SWARTZ**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

**1998**

The University of Cape Town has been given  
the right to reproduce this thesis in whole  
or in part. Copyright is held by the author.

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
<b>CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY .....	1
RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY .....	3
<b>CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>5</b>
DOMESTIC WORKERS (DWs) IN SOUTH AFRICA .....	5
Nature of employment .....	5
Responses to the employment situation.....	7
PARENTING.....	8
Parenting in African communities.....	9
Culture and parenting .....	11
Race and parenting .....	13
RACE AND IDENTITY.....	14
International Research .....	14
South African Research .....	16
TRANS - RACIAL ADOPTION.....	18
International Research .....	18
South African Research .....	20
EXPERIENCES OF BLACK PEOPLE IN WHITE COMMUNITIES .....	23
DWs and their children in white schools .....	24
SUMMARY.....	25

<b>CHAPTER THREE : STUDY DESIGN .....</b>	<b>27</b>
METHODOLOGY .....	27
Observational Study .....	27
Survey .....	28
Depth semi- structured interview .....	29
 SAMPLING.....	 30
 RESEARCH TOOL .....	 31
 CREDIBILITY .....	 32
 FIELD PROCEDURE.....	 33
Contact .....	33
Data Collection .....	33
 ANALYSIS AND INTEPRETATION .....	 33
 <b>CHAPTER FOUR : RESULTS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	 <b>35</b>
NATURE OF EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CHILD OR CHILDREN	36
Terms of address .....	36
Daily living :	
intense involvement .....	38
moderate involvement.....	41
no involvement .....	42
Reason for the child's inclusion .....	43
Summary.....	44
 INITIAL EXPECTATIONS AND SUBSEQUENT FINDINGS .....	 45
 AREAS OF EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT .....	 46
Decision making .....	46
Discipline .....	49

Education.....	50
Summary.....	52

## AREAS OF EMPLOYER NON - INVOLVEMENT : INDEPENDENCE, AUTONOMY AND DIFFERENCE..... 53

Finances .....	53
----------------	----

Culture and Difference.....	56
-----------------------------	----

### Maintaining distance :

Limiting access to resources .....	59
------------------------------------	----

Reinforcing connections with community of origin .....	61
--	----

Summary.....	63
--------------	----

## EMERGENT THEMES..... 65

Differing notions of home.....	65
--------------------------------	----

### Child's adaptation:

School performance.....	67
-------------------------	----

Emotional functioning .....	68
-----------------------------	----

Definition of parent .....	69
----------------------------	----

Racial identity.....	69
----------------------	----

Peers .....	70
-------------	----

Summary.....	70
--------------	----

## CHAPTER FIVE : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... 72

### SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS..... 72

Areas of Involvement .....	72
----------------------------	----

Areas of Non - Involvement.....	73
---------------------------------	----

Respondent G.....	75
-------------------	----

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....

### IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH..... 76

IMPLICATIONS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE..... 76

CONCLUDING COMMENTS ..... 77

REFERENCES ..... 78 - 82

APPENDIX I : INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

University of Cape Town

## ABSTRACT

Domestic workers (DWs) have been described in sociological literature as “trapped” workers. They have been portrayed as workers coerced into powerlessness and unassertiveness by virtue of their economic dependence on employers. Observations of DWs in clinical settings have confirmed these assertions.

This study examines how eight DWs negotiate their parental authority / autonomy while having their own children living with them on their employers’ premises and also having employers involved in parenting DWs’ children.

The results are based on semi-structured interviews with DWs. Interviews were taped, transcribed and the data analysed qualitatively. Results were discussed according to the following themes:

1. the nature of employer involvement
2. areas of employer involvement
3. areas of employer non-involvement in parenting and its relationship to the issues of power, culture and difference.

Emergent themes were identified and discussed. Overall the expected finding that DWs would experience difficulties with parental autonomy was not supported.

Recommendations regarding implications for treatment and research are made.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my deep felt thanks to the following people :

All the participants in this study who sacrificed their time and allowed me to gain some insight into their lives.

Leslie Swartz for his support, insights and being my "thinking container" on the occasions when anxiety set in.

Clement Manoko, the librarian at UNISA, who went to great pains to help me in finding relevant material.

Cora Smith, for her willingness and offers to assist in this research

My parents, Gafsa and Suleiman Christian, for all kinds of support during this process, not least of which was financing my flying between cities to facilitate this research.

My husband, Dhesigen, for his kindness, support, understanding and giving me that extra push when disillusionment set in.

My godson, Zubair, for being himself and showing me the lighter side of life when things seemed insurmountable.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Much has been written on the exploitative nature of domestic work. It has been described by some as being close to slavery and as attracting women who have very limited employment opportunities by virtue of their low educational levels and economic dependence. Available literature has tended to focus on the labour and legal issues related to domestic work. It has tended to focus on locating domestic workers within the context of a broader social and political system.

The nature of the relationship between domestic workers (DWs) and employers has been described as one of dependence, inequality and powerlessness. There has however, been limited inquiry into the psychological consequences of this dependency and inequality for the women engaged in domestic work, and the effect of these on DWs' relationships with their families.

This research project has as its focus on the nature of parenting in the specific household context, where both the DW and her child reside in the employer's home. Specifically I wish to explore, from the DWs perspective, how the inequality in power relations between DWs and employers affects the DWs' parental authority.

#### **Background to the study**

My involvement as a team member in the treatment of a case seen at the Child Guidance Clinic at the University of Cape Town initially directed my attention to the issues which face DWs. Specifically, it drew attention to the complexity of the difficulties experienced by live - in DWs, difficulties which are compounded when their children live with them on the premises of the employer.

The case presented involved the 10 year old child of a DW. The child was referred to the clinic after complaints from his school that he was behaving aggressively toward peers, was disobedient and lied and cheated at school. His mother had worked for the then employer for the past 15 years. The child had been brought up by his mother, on the employer's premises.

During the assessment phase it was evident that the employer was very involved with the child's upbringing. The employer did most of the talking during the interview and wanted full reports on the assessments that had been carried out on the child. The child's mother remained largely silent and spoke only when directly addressed.

The mother expressed shock at hearing about her child's behaviour at school and was unable to provide an indication of what she thought the causes could be. Her involvement and verbal participation in the sessions was notably higher when the employer was absent from the sessions.

The employer said that she felt the cause of the child's behaviour problems was his "not knowing where he belonged", since he spent weekends in the main house and weekdays with his mother. In addition the child often had meals with the employer's family, while his mother served the meals.

As the employer's attendance at sessions decreased, so the mother seemed more comfortable in expressing her feelings openly. She felt that her child's disobedience was related to what she felt was his disrespect towards her. She expressed how having her own home would increase her sense of self respect and allow her to spend more time with her son. She felt it would allow her to control the "spoiling" which she felt characterised the relationship between her employer and her child. Although the DW was grateful for the assistance that she received from her employer, she was also trapped by her employer's demands and their undeniable provision for the child. In addition she was troubled by the fact that her child was unable to relate to her extended family and refused to spend time in the township with her and her extended family during her time away from work.

Increasing contact with this household revealed the powerless position that this DW was in, both as a worker and as a parent. My observations of this case made me wonder how DWs assert and maintain their authority in the face of employer involvement in parenting. By the end of the assessment phase it had become apparent that this child's behaviour was related to finding ways of handling the complex relationships at "home", as well as dealing with the tension between his mother and the employer in their combined struggle to assert authority over him.

In addition, the employer's feelings that the child "did not know where he belonged" seemed to be a factor not only related to the household, but one which also extended beyond the present situation. The child's inability to relate to his mother's community of origin led me to question to which community this child felt he belonged. He was peripheral in both the white community, in which he lived, and the coloured community to which his mother belonged and with whom she identified.

This study hopes to provide an opportunity for the issues involved in DWs' parenting their children in employers' homes to be explored in more detail, and for the nature of the power dynamic between employer and DW to be made more explicit. It is hoped that this information will facilitate the therapeutic processes when cases of this nature present at Children's Clinics, and raise issues and questions of relevance for further research.

### **Rationale for the study**

A literature review yielded a paucity of material on the area of DWs in South Africa and a notable absence of any literature which examined the specific situation of children of DWs.

- \* There is, to my knowledge, no literature which has examined the situation where the employers participate actively in DWs' child rearing.

In 1988, the number of women involved in domestic employ in South Africa, was estimated at between 800 000 and 1 million (Raphaely, 1988). The 1997 South African census data suggest that there are approximately 2 million people involved in domestic employment in South Africa at present (Central Statistical Services, 1997). Although there is no data available that provides a precise indication of the number of these DWs who are in live-in employ, a recent newspaper article reported that the numbers were substantial (Grossett, 1998). Architecture courses are presently taking into account the need for including DWs' accommodation when designing homes (Charlton, 1994). This also an indication of the substantial numbers of women involved in live-in domestic work.

Based on my observations at children's clinics and in conversation with Dr. Cora Smith, the principal psychologist at Transvaal Memorial Institute in Gauteng, it is my impression that the number of children who find themselves in this household situation and present at these clinics, have been on the increase.

Given that a substantial number of black women are involved in domestic employ and an increasing number of them find themselves in live-in domestic employ, it is an area of research that needs to be investigated.

University of Cape Town

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

My interest in investigating DWs' parenting in the household context of DW and her child residing in the employers home and where there is employer involvement in child-care emerged from the case described above. There is, however, recognition that particular cases presenting at Children's Clinics were clinical cases which included specific problems and difficulties that cannot be generalised to the population of DWs and children in this household context. The other problem lies in the fact that clinical intervention brings with it a set of assumptions which may not be applicable to contexts outside of a clinical setting.

However, sociological research has provided information on DWs which has highlighted the lived experiences of DWs and the difficulties which they experience in the employment situation. These difficulties and experiences, I feel, are likely to have an impact on the DW's parenting function in the household context described. This sociological literature will be reviewed below.

### **DOMESTIC WORKERS (DWs) IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The work of Cock (1989), De Souza (1980) and Kedijan (1990) highlighted poor conditions of service, deprivation, poor relationships with employers and paternalistic relations which disempower workers.

Makhudu (1989) highlighted the difficulties that DWs have undergone as a result of apartheid laws, the Group Areas Act and fear of being arrested for contravening pass laws. Linked to this was the fear that DWs experienced as a result of the insecurity of the employment, as well as the lack of legislation in this sector of the labour market (Delpont, 1996).

#### **Nature of employment**

DWs can be seen as "trapped" workers by virtue of having limited choices due to generally low levels of education, no alternative employment opportunities and having to endure daily indignities and frustrations (Cock, 1989). Many DWs described themselves as being slaves since they are dependent on employers for economic survival (Cock, 1989; Mange, 1995).

Their exploitation is severe; having to deal with low wages, long working hours, lack of paid

holidays, lack of job satisfaction and unsatisfactory relationships with employers. This economic entrapment has as consequences, the DWs' social isolation and the breakdown of familial relationships due to their absence from family life.

Cock (1989) notes that there is a marked discrepancy between the perceptions of the relationships between employers and DWs. Her research indicated that most employers described their DWs as "part of the family", whereas not one DW in her sample thought of herself in this way.

Cock (1989) further noted that the relationship between the DW and the employer was characterised by a dominant paternalistic attitude and a sense of superiority on the part of the employer and a sense of dependence on the side of the DW. This paternalism is reflected in the terms of address. In South Africa, the term "girl" is commonly used to refer to women in domestic employ; and the term "boy" used to refer to black men who perform outdoor jobs such as gardening. The term "girl" implies inferiority and reflects a perception that the DW is incapable of making her own decisions. It also denies her status as an adult (Turshen, 1991).

In addition, many DWs felt that they were seen by employers only in their occupational role with a denial of their feelings and needs (Cock, 1989) and that employers had a generally fragmented sense of the DW. Cock (1989) adds that DWs are not expected to have feelings, thoughts, opinions or identities beyond those needed for work. That some DWs have to wear uniforms adds to this sentiment, but is also a visible distinction in status between DW and employer (Preston-Whyte, 1973; Cock, 1989)

This links with the notions of invisibility expressed by Katzman (1978). This author gives examples of DWs' being discussed in their presence. Kotze (1993) adds that being non-conversant in the employer language excludes the DW and adds to her invisibility.

Responses to how the DWs felt about their employers varied, ranging from descriptions like "She's a horrible person", to descriptions like "A nice person. I don't call her madam, I call her aunt" (Cock, 1989: 72).

I am assuming that given the reported paternalism, powerlessness, invisibility, and the general disregard for the DW outside of role as employee, these factors will influence the DW's parenting. Since the employer is in a position of almost absolute power and the DW in a position of dependence and trapped by economic need, the employer may knowingly or unknowingly be undermining the DWs parental authority by extending the employer / employee relationship into the area of parenting. Hence the interest in research around how DWs parent in the employers' home and in how they maintain parental autonomy.

Some indication of how DWs deal with their employment circumstances has been reviewed below and may provide some indications of what to expect when researching the DW parenting in the employers home.

### **Responses to the employment situation**

Cock hypothesises that DWs psychologically deal with the situation in which they find themselves by wearing a mask of deference, a pretence of conforming to the employers' expectations. This implies that while she does "not endorse her subordination, she recognises her powerlessness in the social formation" (Cock, 1989: 85).

Friguglietti's (1989) research on DWs and dependency versus assertiveness in the workplace suggests that there was a general tendency for DWs to express their thoughts both directly in the workplace and indirectly (in projected interaction) without violating the rights and dignity of the target person. Their responses indicated a high level of self awareness and assuredness in themselves, their abilities and their rights within the workplace.

Friguglietti's findings suggest that, although her sample of DWs are self assured and self aware, the exercise of assertion is done within an unequal power relationship. This research suggests that some DWs have found ways in which they can assert themselves within the context of this relationship. This challenges the notion of powerless DWs, presented by Cock and suggests that power is not necessarily exerted uni-directionally as Cock implies.

A limitation of Friguglietti's research is that due to the militant nature of the sample ie. DWs belonging to a union, the ability to assert themselves may be due to this group's generally

more assertive nature, which may not be the case with most women who find themselves in domestic employ and are not organised as a sector within the labour market.

Nevertheless, Friguglietti's research findings of assertive and non-passive DWs, present us with an alternative way of perceiving and thinking about DWs. It leads one to question the very assumptions of DWs being dependent and powerless. It reinforces my interest and curiosity in the research area since a different perspective has been presented. This may have implications for DWs parenting in the employer's home. The implications, by extrapolation of Friguglietti's findings, relate to the possibility that despite the power relations between the DW and employer, the DWs may have developed ways of parenting in this household context, which does not threaten to undermine them as parents and retains their parental autonomy.

Having outlined why examining DWs in the dual role of employee and parent in the employers home is important and interesting, it is necessary to examine the area of parenting in some detail.

## **PARENTING**

Parenting has been defined by Hicks (1988) as the full responsibility that an adult takes for a child until he or she reaches adulthood. It serves the primary function of socializing the child. Bornstein (1995: 6) adds that it is the "continuing task of parents and other care takers to enculturate children, that is to prepare them for socially accepted physical, economic and psychological situations that are characteristic of the culture in which they are to survive and thrive". In Western industrialized societies, this responsibility usually falls on the shoulders of the biological parents.

However, in different cultural contexts care-taking and parenting responsibility are not always distributed in the same ways. Morelli and Tronick (1991), in their research on parenting and child development of the Effe - a forager community living in the Ituri forest in Zaire - found that the Effe have a system of multiple care giving. This starts at birth and minimises the involvement of the biological mother in the overall care-taking of the child throughout the child's life. These research findings have raised questions about the appropriateness of the conventional Westernized models of child care, which is based on the notion that the mother is the primary caretaker during the first few years of life (Morelli and Tronick, 1991).



The same authors express that parenting patterns are shaped by a number of factors which interact and impact on one another. In particular, the Effe community may have adopted these care-taking patterns because of the physical threats in the environment, like dehydration, which may be countered by multiple nursing in that the child's fluid balance will be maintained (Morelli and Tronick, 1995). In addition to this, multiple nursing and care-taking may foster within the child, capacities to relate to different individuals - skills which are necessary within the Effe community in later life.

Parenting patterns are thus shaped by the conditions, contexts and needs of the communities in which people live, with the objective of providing a child with the competencies to live in a particular community, and in so doing perpetuate and maintain that community. Given this, how have the conditions in South Africa contributed to determine parenting patterns, and what are these patterns?

### **Parenting in African communities**

Literature on parent - child relationships in African communities has received very little attention in empirical research. Available research and information about the extent to which parental practices influence the development of African children and adolescents is extremely limited (Mboya, 1995). Dawes (1994 ) attributes the limited research focus on black communities and groups in South Africa to the influences of apartheid on the development of psychology as a discipline.

However, multiple care giving is a common practice in South Africa (Russell, 1995). The system of migrant labour as well as pre-existing cultural practice has contributed to determining parenting patterns. In non-white South African communities, it is not uncommon for members of extended family to take responsibility for children when biological parents are unavailable to fulfil the parenting function. Good examples of this common practice are easily found among black South African communities where children regard aunts as having the same status as their mother and where grandmothers parent grandchildren while parents are involved in employ in urban areas. However, some authors feel that it is also the nature of the interaction between care taker and child in black communities, which is different from Western parenting.

Russell (1995) describes, how in the West, parenting is a one-sided relationship based on obligation to the child. The parent invests time, physical and emotional resources with little reciprocity from the child, who will cease to live with or be supported by parents once they reach adulthood (Russell,1995). Among the African community, the relationship between child and parent or care taker is based on a sense of mutual obligation which endures throughout one's life and is based on material provision, rather than emotional investment (Russell,1995). A son, who had no or little contact with his parents or caretakers, but regularly provided money for the family would, according to Russell (1995), be seen as being a "good son".

Conditions of employ under apartheid dictated that many South African DWs leave their children in the care of others, usually members of the extended family. They could visit their child / children only during annual leave. However, since the abolition of apartheid laws, employers of DWs are increasingly allowing the children of live - in DWs to stay with their biological parent on employers' premises. The fact that many women choose to have their children with them, rather than allowing them to be cared for by other care takers in the communities of origin, seems contrary to Russell's theory that the bond between African parent and child is based on material care rather than emotional care. On the other hand, it may be argued that living in the city in relatively affluent white communities, does provide the child with greater opportunity for material gain which, according to Russell's theory, is in the long term, also gain and opportunity for the family. The above debate however, extends beyond the limits of this study, and as such, will not be pursued in this dissertation.

These theories are however, relevant to this study because of the implications that they have for our research area. If, as literature above suggests, parenting has one of its functions the transmission of culturally appropriate norms and behaviours and if indeed parenting patterns are shaped by the conditions, contexts and needs of that community, then is socialization of the DWs child by both the DW and the employer not merely a necessary adaptation to the change in conditions and the context in which all parties now find themselves ? And is it not in the child's and the DW's best interest to also have the employer involved in parenting, since the employer would be more able to transmit to the child the behaviours and norms of the white community in which he lives ?

I feel that at some levels this may be the case, and that this parenting arrangement could be a positive development and adaptation for all parties concerned. For the DW and the child, it has the obvious material benefits. For the employer it provides the opportunity to assist in a child's development and to share resources which the child would otherwise not have access to.

However, I feel that there may be areas in which being parented by both the employer and DW could be problematic. Being parented by both the DW and the employer could affect the area of identity development, and more specifically the development of both a cultural and racial identity. Let us examine the relationship between parenting and culture and racial identity more closely in order to highlight and anticipate areas of possible difficulty.

### **Culture and parenting**

Although there has been much written on the topic of culture, very few authors have attempted to define it, presumably due to its elusive and fluid nature (Jahoda, 1984). Gobodo (1990: 93) defines culture as "...the configuration of learned behaviour and results of behaviour whose components and elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society". There is thus a sense of patterns of behaviour being passed over from time generation to generation. These patterns of behaviour encompass all spheres of life and will determine the nature of the roles that people play in that community (Gobodo, 1990). For example, culture to some extent determines how people conduct themselves as spouses, parents and children within a given community, with language being a cultural medium of expression.

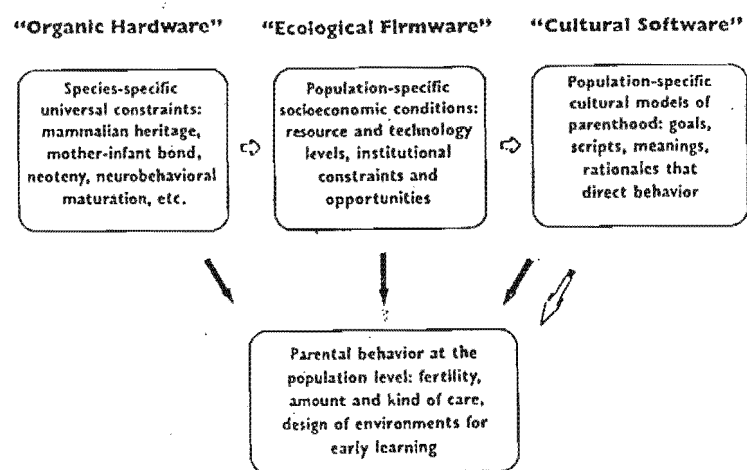
Cross cultural studies in child rearing have often addressed issues that arise from Western assumptions about child rearing and development, without taking into account the local contexts of the communities being studied (LeVine et al., 1994). This has been problematic in that the validity of research findings is questionable since they are based on inaccurate assumptions. In addition, research of this nature is damaging since it passes value judgements on cultural practices based on these assumptions.

An example of this kind of bias was cited by Tomlinson (1997) in his writing on attachment patterns in South Africa. Attachment behaviour is assessed by Ainsworth's Strange Situation

experiments in which children's reactions to being removed from a parent in a strange situation is measured and classified. In it infants are classified to be either securely attached, insecurely attached or avoidant, with secure attachment being the ideal for "healthy" psychological development. This experiment was conducted on a German population and results indicated that more German children behaved avoidantly, than did American children (Tomlinson, 1997). The researchers attributed this to German mothers' being more concerned with independence training than were American mothers. Based on the assumption that secure attachment was the ideal, the researchers concluded that the mothers of avoidant German infants were insensitive, a label which according to the study could be assigned to nearly half the West German mothers (Tomlinson, 1997). This research has been criticised because the children's "avoidant " behaviour has been seen as a competency necessary for appropriate behaviour within this German culture of relating.

Taking cognisance of the assumptions underpinning the current study, it is necessary to ask whether the research question is culturally bound and based on assumptions which may be irrelevant to the populations being investigated. One obvious bias is that the question may not have taken sufficient account of the common practice of multiple care giving among black South African communities. LeVine et al (1994) have provided a model to assist in thinking about child rearing, which has assisted in minimising the imposition of western assumptions in research. I have found this model useful for this study.

LeVine et al (1994) refer to their model as a cultural mediation model of understanding child rearing and applied it to their study of parenting in Gusii community of Kenya. The model is represented below:



LeVine et al (1994: 17)

Organic hardware refers to the physical and biological abilities of parents. The extent to which this hardware will be used in child care will be determined by the ecological framework (population specific socio-economic conditions) and the cultural software (population specific cultural models of parenthood) of a specific population (LeVine et al, 1994).

In the same way, parent - child interactions begin with the ability (hardware) to communicate and respond. This is however mediated by the social environment and the local conventions of interpersonal communication and kin relationships that have pre-existed (LeVine et al, 1994). Thus with regard to this study, the interaction between the DW and her child will be mediated by the fact that they are physically located within a white community and reside in a household in which the employer is involved in parenting the child. The nature of the parent-child interaction will also be determined by the nature of interpersonal communications within the employer's household and the DW's community, which are different. In the terms of LeVine et al (1994), this study is interested in how the ecological firmware and the change in cultural software has affected DW parenting.

Despite having attempted to examine and minimize the influence of Western assumptions on the research question through application of the LeVine model to this research question, I feel that the research question is still a valid one. Although the involvement of the DW and the employer in child rearing could superficially be seen as a multiple care giving arrangement, such a conclusion is misleading, since it fails to take into account the influence of racial differences in parenting, which in South Africa are salient social features and need to be considered when investigating parenting and parental autonomy.

### **Race and parenting**

Is raising and parenting a black child any different from parenting a white child ? Some authors believe that it is or should be, given that black children's socialisation needs to include preparation for dealing with the issue of race in a society that is highly racist, while this factor is absent for white children (Comer & Poussaint, 1992).

Comer and Poussaint (1992) maintain that parents are most able to equip their children to function as individuals, family members and citizens when they have a sense of belonging in a larger society. In America, racist attitudes and actions are said to deny black people a sense

of belonging to the larger society and black parents are not always willing to transmit certain values and traditions of the dominant culture to their children (Comer & Poussaint, 1992).

In South Africa this concern can be taken one step further in that parenting black children comes with it the transmission of a specific culture that makes up the South African "rainbow nation". This culture is different from the dominant minority culture of the pre - apartheid era. The sense of belonging which Comer and Poussaint (1992) refer to, in South Africa today, is a sense of belonging to an indigenous culture with specific languages, practices and a sense of racial identity, that will inevitably be affected by immersion in 'white' westernised culture.

Let us examine in more detail how racial identity develops and how it could be influenced by immersion into 'white' westernised culture.

## **RACE AND IDENTITY**

### **International Research**

Initial research in America in the late 1930s suggested that children have developed a rudimentary awareness of race and racial categories at age of three (Foster, 1986,1994). According to Katz (1976), this awareness develops rapidly between the ages of three and four and is firmly established by the age of six.

Instruction of parents and cultural artefacts like games and toys are thought to be the major factors which contribute to the development of this awareness, while others have hypothesised that racial awareness develops from non-verbal forms like fear of the dark or evaluative connotations attached to light and darkness that are generalised and applied to the others (Foster, 1986).

Research has been unable to clearly define the pattern of subsequent racial development, although it has indicated that racial development occurs differently for black children than for white children (Foster, 1986). Studies using the Clark dolls (black and white dolls used to assess children's racial identification) have shown that black children show preference and identification for white stimulus figures more frequently than do white children for black stimulus figures (Foster, 1986).

This "misidentification" has been assumed to be the basis for psychological damage such as problems with self-esteem, alienation or identity conflicts. According to Foster (1986, 1994) research by Vaughn, Aboud and Skerry, Clark and Clark and Davey, based on this hypothesis, has shown that white children are ethnocentric at the age of four years. This sense develops and grows until age seven (Foster, 1986, 1994). At this time ethnocentricity either decreases or remains the same. For black children, there was a strong out group preference and identification at age four which gradually decreased until the age of six or seven. At the age of eleven or twelve, own group preference had developed (Foster, 1986). No studies have reported an increase in misidentification and in recent studies own group identification has been the finding among black children (Foster, 1986). These changes have been attributed to social and historical developments (Foster, 1986, 1994).

Personal identity formation, including racial identity development, is according to Plummer (1995), a developmental task of adolescence. There is little research which has indicated how racial identity develops from racial awareness in childhood to a racial identity development in adolescence. Stevenson (1995) proposes that racial socialisation represents a way of understanding this link. Racial socialisation is the process of communicating messages to the child in order to develop their sense of identity in order to develop pride in themselves and their culture and also to equip them to dealing with racially hostile encounters (Stevenson, 1995). He maintains that children need to have developed and internalised a sense of the social - biological meanings of race before they can develop racial preference or attitudes.

According to Cross in Plummer (1995), the themes and stages of race development for Americans is as follows:

- 1) A pre -encounter phase, in which the child conceptualises life from a white European frame of reference.
- 2) An encounter phase in which racial issues are awakened usually through a critical incident in one's life.
- 3) An immersion stage in which the individual moves into taking ownership of his or her racial identity i.e. embracing racial values and culture
- 4) An internalisation phase, in which the individual possesses a heightened awareness of the meanings associated with being black.

Plummer's (1995) sample of African American adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 had developed primary internalisation themes in their racial identity development. She attributes this development to having grown up with a sense of pride in their race as a result of having grown up in environments in which parents have prepared children for the status of being black in America. Another explanation that she provides is that these children could be modelling parental racial attitudes since African American adolescents mirrored almost exactly African American middle aged adults.

### **South African Research**

South African research on the development of racial identity by Melamed indicates that children have a racial awareness at the age of three or four. Studies on white South African children have suggested that by the age of six, white children are able to differentiate between races as well as showing preference for and assigning positive stereotypes to caucasoid featured faces (Foster, 1986). Barling's research found that white ethnocentrism increased between the ages of seven and twelve, indicating that this in-group favouritism may indicate conformity to racist norms of South African white society (Foster, 1986).

Black children's racial awareness and development is not as definitive as the research on white children. Research by Lambert and Klineberg found that children aged six and ten referred to themselves primarily in terms of race. By the age of fourteen, definition of the self was in terms of gender with race being an important category of description (Foster, 1986).

Compared to children of the same age in eleven other countries, Africans were the only group who used race as the most important self descriptive category, suggesting the centrality of racial categorisation for black South African youth (Foster, 1986, 1994).

With regard to racial preference, research (using the Clark dolls) has found statistically significant preference for white stimulus figures among children aged three to seven (Foster, 1986). These white preference results are larger and more consistent than those found in international studies (Foster, 1986). Preference for the white stimulus doll was stronger in black rural children.

Studies using other research techniques have provided further support for black children showing out - group preference in a sample of Indian children aged between three and six



(Foster, 1986). In another study most African children in the sample wanted to be white (Foster, 1986). The research on white children has shown that they are more ethnocentric than blacks. According to Foster (1994), more recent research by Aaron suggests that this ethnocentrism decreases with increasing age in both white and black children. By the age of 11 to 12 years differences in ethnocentrism between white children and black children are minimal (Foster, 1994).

Results on misidentification were not consistent in the South African research with De Groot, Meij and Gregor and McPherson yielding different and contradictory figures for misidentification in their studies ie. 64%, 51% and 34% misidentification respectively (Foster, 1986). The white sample, however, showed a far greater own group identification, with the same level of racial awareness in both white and black groups (Foster, 1986). Other studies have shown that, consistent with international research, increasing age is related to decreasing misidentification (Foster, 1986).

Research on group identity and ethnocentrism beyond the age of seven indicates most African children chose to be white if they had to be part of a group other than their own. The most undesirable choice was being part of another tribal group especially if that group was similar to their own (Foster, 1986). At age 14 the "boers" were rated as the second most undesirable group. Although misidentification had decreased with increasing age, it seems as though "contradictions and inconsistencies still remain as part of the attitudinal structure" (Foster, 1986: 172).

Research on the development of racial attitudes suggests that parental influence is minimal to the political socialisation of black adolescents (Foster, 1986), findings which challenges the assumption that parental modelling contributes significantly to racial attitudes. Black matric pupils were found to be greatly influenced by peers in the development of political attitudes, while white adolescents were influenced more by parents (Foster, 1986).

Studies on parental influence on the race attitudes of their children indicates that among whites, the influence of parents may be strong in affecting race attitudes in young children (six to eight years), while influence is reduced during adolescence with race attitudes becoming more positive in middle to late adolescence (Foster, 1986).

A more recent study which examined children between six and eleven on the issues of racial awareness and identification, showed that both African and White children had increased in-group preference results. These results support international research on the reduction of misidentification among blacks in recent years (Foster, 1986, 1994).

Thus for African children, race is an important construct in identifying and defining themselves. Parental influence in determining racial attitudes have been shown to be significant for younger children, with parental influence diminishing over time as peer interactions become more significant in the child's life and start to influence racial attitudes.

The research above is based on children growing up in same race communities. What effect would living in a different racial community have on the racial identity development of a child. For example, what effect would living in a white community have on the racial identity development of a black child? The question becomes even more complex when applying this to the live-in DWs in South Africa. The question now has to focus on the impact on racial identity for the DW's child who lives in a white community and where the parental figures are from different racial groups in a society where this racial division (between the DW and the employer) is a reflection of the broader racial and economic divisions. How would the combination of these factors affect racial identity and a sense of group preference and belonging?

The issues involved are complex and cannot be answered categorically or simplistically. Research on trans-racial adoption could provide us with some information that may assist in thinking about the issue of racial identity development.

## **TRANS-RACIAL ADOPTION**

### **International Research**

Trans - racial adoption began in America in the 1960s as a way of placing black children who were awaiting adoption. This practice was objected to by the National Association of Black Social Workers and they proposed that children should be placed with same race families (Simon & Alstein, 1992).

Their motivation for this position was that black children in white homes are cut off from the healthy development of themselves as black people (Simon & Alstein, 1992). They maintained that the socialisation of children begins from birth, and that the process includes familiarity with and knowledge of cultural heritage, which a white family is unable to provide (Simon & Alstein, 1992). The acquisition of this knowledge and culturally relevant habits and values, facilitates and is said to optimise adaptation and while giving the child a sense of social and ecological competence (De Berry, Scarr & Weinberg, 1996).

De Berry (1996) maintains that African American parents implement some form of racial socialisation from as early as two and a half. Peters (1958) suggests that from this age parents start preparing their children for coping with oppression by discussing racial differences and planning to teach them strategies for coping with racism. De Berry (1992) supports this position, and expresses that African American socialisation maintains a unique, multi-faceted form of competence which includes awareness, understanding and the implementation of strategies critical to African Americans' resilience against oppression. Johnson, Shireman and Watson (1987) feel that this form of socialisation plays an important role in developing a black identity.

Studies on trans - racial identity however have produced results contrary to the theory postulated above. Johnson et al (1997) found that in their sample 75% of the trans - racially adopted children were judged to be doing well and were relatively free of symptoms of emotional distress. This proportion was similar to those found in in-racial adoption studies where 80% of the children were free of problems. Of these 25% (9 children) of the children that were experiencing problems, 4 of them were aggressive, insecure and had difficulties at school and at home, 3 of them had learning disabilities and 2 had chronic health problems.

In terms of racial identity; Johnson et al (1987), using the Clark dolls, found that in children aged four, more children in trans-racial adoptive homes expressed a black preference than did children in all - black adoptive homes. At age 8, the trans-racial adopted group maintained their sense of blackness while the children in the all - black homes expressed a black preference which increased and exceeded that of children in the trans-racial homes.

Bagley studied 27 Afro - Caribbean and mixed-race children adopted by white families to measure psycho-neurosis, depression, free floating anxiety, self esteem, identity and ego identity and self image. Over a period of 12 years, Bagley found no difference between the children on any variable (Alexander & Curtis, 1996).

Simon and Alstein's (1992) longitudinal study on trans-racial adoptees of 366 children in America measured these children on the variables of racial identity, awareness and attitudes and have found that African American children adopted by white families fared no worse than other children. Results from the studies above suggest that placement with white families did not affect the development of a racial identity.

### **South African research**

Trans-racial adoption is a relatively new phenomenon in South Africa, with adoption across the colour line being illegal until as late as 1990. Trans-racial adoption became legal in 1991 with the amendment to section 14 of the Childcare Amendment Act 1991, which repealed the requirement that the racial classification of a child and adoptive parent or parents should be the same (Mosikatsana, 1995).

There is limited research on this topic in South Africa. Research by Simpkins, Boulton and Cunningham (1990), prior to the legalisation of trans-racial adoption, has found that professionals, held a variety of opinions on the issue of trans-racial adoption.

Professionals opposed to trans-racial adoption were in the minority and opposed it primarily because they felt that South African racial division was too severely entrenched and that accommodation of racially different children would be too difficult. A possible problem anticipated by respondents was that of racial identity formation. They expressed concerns with regard to children experiencing confusion around their racial identity and linked to this, also possible psychological and psycho - social problems later in their lives (Simpkins et al, 1990). This was supported in the literature by Mosikatsana (1995) who felt that children may suffer racial prejudice from adoptive parents or the communities in which adoptive parents live.

Further, he also supported the idea that there could be problems related to loss of identity or identity confusion and problems with cultural identity formation (Mosikatsana, 1995).

Another concern expressed, was that vast cultural differences exist between the racial groups in South Africa and that whites do not have the knowledge about black culture to attempt an assimilation of values and ideas (Simpkins et al, 1990). Mosikatsana (1995) feels that despite the changes in South Africa at present, a legacy of apartheid means that South African society is still racially, economically and culturally polarised, and that the adopted child would suffer in the long term as a result of living in a community that may reject him or her. In addition, being seen as part of a white community may prevent affiliation to black communities, leaving the child with a sense of isolation racially, culturally and linguistically.

Ladner (1977) has also opposed the placement of black children with white parents since she feels that white parents would be unable to provide black children with the “survival skills” eg. abilities to ignore racial insults, deciding on appropriate ways of dealing with racism either fighting back or submitting and emphasising and generally developing a positive black consciousness, that they would require to adapt to living in a highly racialized society.

The latter ideas have been supported by the international literature and have been the concerns of international organisations opposing trans-racial adoption. Mosikatsana (1995) raised another objection toward trans-racial adoption. He feels that the practices of trans-racial adoption developed in South Africa primarily as a means to provide white couples with children, rather than to provide needy children with homes. As such, he feels that the children are not the priority in this practice and that they are therefore more vulnerable to racist practices and feelings of the communities in which they would live.

He feels that the solution lies in developing non-white communities to adopt non-white children, rather than remove black children from white homes (Mosikatsana, 1995).

Professionals in favour of trans-racial adoption have argued that concerns around cultural and religious exposure are irrelevant since membership to these institutions is part of the socialisation process and something which the child will get exposure to through his or her development (Simpkins et al , 1990). Another argument has been that since the struggle in

South Africa has been around non-racism and that children should be placed with a family irrespective of racial or ethnic consideration.

The South African Black Social Worker's Association has not expressed a formal position on trans-racial adoption (Mosikatsana, 1995).

Since 1991 there have been at least 24 trans-racial adoptions that have taken place through the Johannesburg Child Welfare (Mosikatsana, 1995). Information from a telephonic interview with Morag Scordilus, a social worker at the Adoption Centre in Claremont in Cape Town, provided information on the numbers of children adopted cross - racially in this area.

According to her records seven children had been adopted cross -racially through their agency in the last three years. The adoptions in both Johannesburg and Cape Town involved white parents adopting black children. There have been no known published studies on these children. Reports from parents in Johannesburg indicate that there seems to be more resistance from people in the same racial group as the adoptive child, than from white communities (Mosikatsana, 1995).

Based on the information that:

- a) racial misidentification and identity confusion has tended to decrease over time with social and historical changes,
- b) black children (6 -11 years) have shown a greater in group preference in recent years than before,
- c) international research on trans-racial adoptees has shown no disturbance in racial identity development and
- d) reports from South African parents who have adopted trans-racially has reported no major difficulties with the child adjusting to living in a white community,

we could assume that racial identity development may not be as disturbed as one might have initially thought.

However, what have the subjective experiences of those black people who have lived in white communities or have had the experience of spending a significant amount of time in previously white institutions been? Isolated reports on black people in white communities as well as

South African research on black children who attended white schools after desegregation in the late eighties, may provide us with some information.

## **EXPERIENCES OF BLACK PEOPLE IN WHITE COMMUNITIES**

*Drum* magazine featured an article relating the story of a black South African woman, who was adopted by a British middle class family. She described her experience in growing up in this situation as "growing up not quite knowing who she was or where she belonged" (Oliver, 1995: 14). She describes how her adoptive family always wanted to assimilate her into the family and in so doing, failed to educate her about "...the other bit of myself...the reality is it denies the other part of your culture"(Oliver, 1995 : 15). She described her struggle as being all "about belonging and not belonging"(Oliver, 1995:18).

The experiences of black children at white schools echo some of the sentiments expressed by Oliver's findings. Christie's (1990) research on racially mixed Catholic schools in the 1980s indicate that black pupils experience considerable difficulty in making the transition from segregated schools to mixed schools and spoke of having difficulty mixing with white pupils.

Most of the boys in Christie's sample attributed the difficulty to cultural difficulties rather than to racism. Some children attributed the racial divisions being out numbered in terms of there being greater numbers of white children at the school. Out of school, socialising was easier for white pupils and a sense of isolation was reported for some black pupils. One pupil articulated her dilemma as follows:

I don't feel at all that I'm in a community. I don't belong in a white community because I am black, and I don't belong in a black community because I go to a white school and they don't understand that I am coming here for a better education (Christie, 1990:62)

According to Christie almost every black pupil spoke of being excluded by their community, being a 'snob' or a 'bit out of it'(1990 :63). Beard and Gaganakis (1991) also found that their sample defined themselves as excluded from their school and from their communities. They reported that the pupils in their sample "concealed affiliation" by changing out of uniforms before they got home, refraining from speaking English and censoring their conversation.

I expect that the present experiences of children at what previously were white schools, would be quite different and the adaptation to racial mixing far smoother, given the drive toward de-racialization of South Africa and the experience of desegregation not as foreign as it was ten years ago. Nevertheless, South African society is still racist and there still is discrimination based on race and economic status. I believe that the location of the DW and her child within the broader social context of parenting in a white, middle class community, may impact upon the parenting style and the ability of the DW to exercise parental autonomy.

There has been limited psychological research examining the experiences of DWs living in white communities. Some research has however been done on the experiences of DWs who send their children to white schools, which may provide us with some insights into the lived experience of DWs in this context.

#### **DWs and their children in white schools**

DWs have had extremely deprived educational backgrounds and this may be a factor contributing to the DWs high educational aspirations for their children (Cock, 1989). While children sent to formerly white schools has fulfilled this aspiration, the consequences for the DW has resulted in greater dependency on employers since ongoing financial assistance is needed from them (Cock, 1989).

Mange (1995) conducted research on DWs living in black communities but whose children's education was in white schools and paid for by white employers. She found that the women experienced advantages, as well as many disadvantages in having their children in this situation. Some of the advantages that these women experienced were improved parent and child relationships, school gains and educational advancement.

They felt however, that the disadvantages far outweighed the advantages. According to Mange (1995) these women felt that they had to sacrifice themselves to their employers since they were almost always entirely dependent on the employer to carry the financial costs of schooling. They felt that because of this, they had to suppress their own needs. Most DWs also felt stigmatised at having to attend school meetings since they were expected to relate on an equal footing with white parents, who in other circumstances, are their employers. With



regard to their children, these women felt that there had been periods during their employment when the children were closer to the employer than to the mother.

Another disadvantage was that DWs felt that their circumstances caused difficulty in the parent-child relationship. DWs felt that their inability to understand English made it difficult to relate to their children in that language, experiences which are humiliating and embarrassing for the DW. Their children's feelings of guilt at seeing their parents toil daily, caused difficulties in their relationship. Lastly DWs felt that within their communities, their children were stigmatised and alienated because of their attendance at white schools. Linked to this alienation was the women's fear that their children were losing the mother tongue and would thus lose the ability to interact with DWs, their family and the community.

The experiences of these DWs has highlighted both the negative and positive aspects for DWs of having their children attend white schools. I expect that the DWs who have employers involved in their parenting would also have both negative and positive experiences of this phenomenon. By extrapolation from Mange's findings, one could anticipate that employer involvement with DW children would have similar disadvantages namely, losing the mother tongue, alienation from communities of origin, difficulties within the parent child relationship and a closer relationship between the child and the employer than between the child and DW. However that may be, the literature suggests that DWs have had to sacrifice themselves in order to ensure a better future for themselves and their children. The question in this study is whether parental autonomy has been among the things that DWs have needed to sacrifice in order to have their children advance.

## **SUMMARY**

A review of these diverse areas of literature related to the topic has reflected the complexity of the issues under investigation. Let us briefly summarise how the available literature has guided opinion to this point.

DWs in South Africa have been described as "trapped" workers. Trapped by virtue of their economic immobility and their dependence on employers, who have the power to "hire and fire" at will. The literature describes different and conflicting reports dealing with the employment situation, being either dependent and passive for fear of losing a job, or assertive

and expressive within certain boundaries. This information has been applied to DWs parenting in the employers' home and has led to the conclusion that DWs could either be undermined by employers who are involved with their children or be respected as the primary parent and have parental autonomy.

I have, however, argued that perhaps these two extremes are not appropriate to this study and perhaps employer involvement in parenting as a form of multiple care-giving (common in black South African communities) may be more appropriate. If the employer is involved in parenting this fails to take into account the important issues of race and culture, the DW's role in transmitting these identities to the child and the possible confusion in racial identity development.

Research in the area of racial identity development has shown that internationally, racial identity is not significantly affected when children grow up in racially different communities. However, black people's subjective experiences of living in racially different communities, has shown that adaptation is not an easy process. Similarly, it is assumed that DWs living in white communities experience difficulties given the racial and economic differences between the DW, employer and the broader community. It is hypothesised that despite the obvious material benefits of employer involvement in DW parenting, one of the sacrifices that DWs may need to make is their parental autonomy.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **STUDY DESIGN**

#### **METHODOLOGY**

##### **Observational Study**

The question of how DWs parent in employers' homes, and of how they negotiate their parental authority is at best an empirical question. An observational study could provide direct evidence of parenting behaviours, and further information (such as school reports and collateral from others) could be gleaned to supplement this material. There are however a number of problems with this approach. These include the following:

1. This type of surveillance is likely to be intrusive and affect behaviour, thus biasing research findings.
2. The decision to participate in the study may be influenced by already existing power relations. The decision to participate may thus be imposed and so infringe on household members freedom to choose to participate.
3. The request to participate in psychological research, may be interpreted by members of that household as being due to problems, and this may influence their behaviour during the period of observation.

For these reasons this methodology was not felt to be appropriate in answering the research question and the decision was made to focus on reports of parenting rather than to observe parenting directly.

In attempting to answer the question on how DWs parent in the employers home and how they maintain parental autonomy in the face of employer involvement in parenting, two other methodological options have been considered. These methodological options were the survey method of research or in depth qualitative research methods.

##### **Survey**

A survey research methodology would offer the advantages of providing useful quantitative data from a large representative sample of respondents. However, the disadvantages that this

methodology presented made it an unattractive option for a number of reasons that will be discussed below.

1. Since the area under investigation is new and relatively unexplored, defining precise questions and areas of investigation was extremely difficult since the defined questions may not have been relevant to the DWs' experiences.
2. This method of research does not take into account the high illiteracy levels among the population under investigation and also fails to accommodate the diversity in language use among this sector of the population. This problem could have been dealt with by translating the questionnaire into the different languages and by employing people who speak these languages to conduct the interviews. It was nevertheless impractical to pursue this process because of time and limited budget constraints.
3. The problem of access to DWs presented another major disadvantage. In accessing the DWs through the employer I anticipated bias in the nature of the responses and possible ethical issues related to the DWs' employment circumstances. Related to this was my concern that by accessing DWs through the employer, I could also be guilty of exploiting a power relation between the DW and the employer. The DW would not be likely to refuse participation in the study if her employer suggested that she should.
4. A further disadvantage related to the fact that there are no precise figures available of the women in DW employ, and thus there is no sampling frame from which to judge whether the numbers accessed would be representative or not. Thus this methodology could not ensure representivity without the establishment of a sampling frame - an undertaking which would be expensive and time-consuming.
5. I was concerned about the nature of the data that would be obtained using the survey methodology, since data would be superficial.
6. Another concern with questionnaire responses emerged, especially with respondents not familiar with research methods. DWs' feelings about their parenting were likely to be at times contradictory and inconsistent (as is the case with most people's feelings about parenting), but answering a questionnaire could bias the respondents towards wanting to answer in a consistent manner. Questionnaire methodology, therefore, could obscure important contradictions in respondents' feelings - and these contradictions are precisely part of what be of most interest in a psychological study.

Since the disadvantages of this method outweighed the advantages and this method would not best answer my research question, I needed to consider an alternative methodology. The alternative I considered was the use of an interview.

### Depth semi - structured interviews

\* Bannister et al (1995) and Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest the use of qualitative research methods in studies that are largely exploratory in nature. They support this approach because it provides in depth information and allows for the generation of questions and hypotheses for future research. In addition, it was felt that the interview would allow detailed exploration of issues around culture and its impact on parenting and would allow me to explore areas comparable to the clinical issues which emerged in the cases that I had observed.

Given the ethical concerns above, this method would allow for accessing DWs independently of their employers and give them the freedom to choose whether to participate in the study outside of any possible employers' pressure in the matter. In addition, the interpersonal contact and the sensitivity of the researcher allows for investigating sensitive topics.

The personal characteristics of having a black, woman researcher asking sensitive questions around areas of parenting may enhance data generation whereas confrontation with a typed questionnaire may be perceived as somewhat threatening and intimidating. The personal contact was also felt to have the advantage of reducing any fears that their jobs may be threatened as well as reducing any suspicion that the respondents might have. My active involvement in the data gathering process had the added advantages of my being able to explore atypical responses, capture a holistic sense of the DWs' world, clarify process dynamics, generate hypotheses in situ and allowed for adaptability and responsiveness within the context of the inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, 1989). The emphasis on personal contact links with Guba and Lincoln (1985, 1989) and Allan and Skinner's (1991) assertions that subjectivity enhances rather than restricts the research process in the social sciences.

Lastly this method of data collection was feasible given the time and financial constraints under which I was under.

The disadvantage of using this methodology however, was that the sample size had to be small and that representivity could not be an objective in this study. As a result the findings could

NR

not be considered generalisable, and arguments may not be as persuasive as with a large sample. However, despite these disadvantages, the interview methodology was still felt to be the method which could most adequately answer the research question.

## **SAMPLING**

Access to DWs was an extremely difficult task given that there are no institutions which organise DWs. One such body that had existed up to 1997, was the Domestic Workers Union, which organised DWs around labour issues. This union however, has ceased to exist and labor issues related to DWs is now dealt with by the General Workers Union. Accessing DWs belonging to this union was also extremely difficult since the union organisers had limited time available to assist in accessing a sample. In addition, I was reluctant to have a sample consisting only of DWs who obviously had problems related to work, since I felt that this would influence my results, giving me a skewed picture.

Another alternative for gaining access to DWs was through the children's schools. Time constraints made this form of access to DWs difficult as the Department of Education inform researchers that they have to budget at least three months before permission is granted for research to be undertaken at schools.

In conversation about my dilemma with a union organiser, I was told about a programme run on South African television early in 1998. It was a talk show which focused on issues related to DWs' experiences. Organisers of this programme allowed me access to 10 of the women who participated in the show. They had volunteered to be on the show in response to a television advertisement. Screening for DWs appearance on the show was based purely on numbers to fill the programme as key speakers and the issues to be highlighted had already been selected by the organisers prior to the advertisement. The organisers had mislaid addresses for the remaining participants; there was no evidence however that those for whom the addresses were available, were different with respect to the focus of the current study from those for whom addresses had been lost.

Of the 10 DWs approached, eight of them agreed to participate in the study. Two DWs refused to participate, based on their employers' objections to their having participated in the television show without employers' permission. Their anticipation that their employers would

also disapprove of their participation in this study was given as the primary reason for refusal to participate.

The sample used in this study therefore, was a convenience sample as described by Guba and Lincoln (1985). The implication of using this convenience sample however, is that the sample may be biased in that the agreement of the DWs to participate in the study may be indicative of a particular kind of relationship with the employer.

The participants were all black South African women working for white employers. They ranged in age from 34 to 67 years in age. Six of the women had their own children living with them. One of the six had two of her children living with her. The other two women had their grandchild or grandchildren living with them.

Given that there were only eight respondents available for my study, generalizability and representativity of results was limited, and was not a primary objective of the study. The study was seen as an opportunity to explore the lived experiences of these DWs in the area of parenting and with the hope that this discussion would generate information and specific questions for further research. It did not strive to uncover an absolute, universal, predictable and homogenous truth. It hopes to capture the multiple realities of the DWs and their experiences of parenting.

## **RESEARCH TOOL**

A semi - structured interview was used to obtain data, a copy of which has been included as Appendix I. A semi - structured interview would provide the balance between structured and unstructured interviews, described by Guba and Lincoln (1989), that I needed. It allowed me to inquire around areas of interest, but also made provision for the respondents to direct the interview into areas which they felt needed to be addressed.

This method of data gathering also made provision for the possibility that all respondents may not be literate and allowed the relationship between the respondents and the researcher to develop, thus easing tensions and allowing rapport to develop. In addition, the interview also allowed the researcher to reformulate and change questions as the circumstances changed and as unanticipated issues began to emerge (Kerlinger, 1986). Lastly, given the sensitive nature

(as defined by Lee and Renzetti, 1993) of the research topic and the anticipated emotionality of respondents, the semi-structured interview provided a guide which assisted in maintaining focus (Smith, 1995).

## CREDIBILITY

Credibility refers to methods that have been built into the study design which will make it more likely that believable findings and interpretations are produced. I, like the respondents, have particular experiences and ways of making sense of the world. These perceptions will inevitably impact on the subject under investigation and also on the way in which the data obtained will be analyzed. Based on this, it is necessary to examine how the research design will ensure that findings are credible and not purely findings limited by my perceptions.

I have attempted to account for these biases and assumptions primarily by using qualitative research methods, in which the principles of indexicality and reflexivity are an intrinsic part. These will be explained below.

Bannister et al.(1994) refer to *indexicality* as being the understanding that explanations are always context bound and as contexts change, so too will explanations. Since I was motivated by the meanings that I attached to particular cases seen at Child Guidance Clinics, there needed to be an awareness on my part that the context in which the research was conducted was different. For this reason, I needed to be constantly aware and critical of the bases for my assumptions.

*Reflexivity* refers to the ability to stand back and examine one's assumptions, perceptions and meanings attached to experiences and the world (Bannister et al, 1994). I have had particular experiences of being a black woman in South Africa and particular experiences of gender, racial and economic power relations. I also share the experience of working and living in a location that is geographically removed from what I consider home. These are some of the factors which may influence the focus of the topic as well as the interpretation and analysis of the data. I have thus, had to be highly reflexive and acutely aware of the influence of these factors throughout the research process.



In addition, included in the research design has been a process of peer debriefing which provided the opportunity for external evaluation of the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; 1989). The debriefer in this investigation was a peer who has had substantial experience in qualitative research and who is a lecturer in psychology.

## **FIELD PROCEDURE**

### **Contact**

The first contact with respondents was telephonic. I introduced myself as a student doing research, informed respondents of where I had obtained contact numbers, provided a brief description of the nature of the research that I was hoping to undertake and inquired about whether they would be interested in participating.

Judging by the response to the first (telephonic) contact, I agreed to meet with the potential respondents in person to explain the research area in more detail. This was the first physical contact with respondents. Based on their willingness or unwillingness after our physical meeting, a date and meeting time was set for when the interview would be undertaken. In total eight of the ten women approached agreed to participate in the study.

### **Data collection**

The interviews took place on a venue convenient for the respondents and interviews were recorded using audio cassettes. The interviews were conducted in English and lasted for approximately 1 - 2 hours each.

## **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Thematic analysis was used as a means to make sense of the data obtained. I was influenced by the principles of grounded theory described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Berg (1995).

Grounded theory has its emphasis on the development of theory that follows from data rather than theory preceding data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The strength of this principle and methodology lies in the fact that the results are allowed to emerge rather than having to fit into a pre-determined theory. This is what Guba and Lincoln (1985, 1989) refer to as emergent design. The data analysis is thus largely inductive, rather than deductive, creating and defining working hypotheses and questions that emerge from the data.

The data was understood using the theoretical tools of power and autonomy, since the power relationship between DW and employer has implicit in it, inequality and issues related to power and autonomy.

Immersion in the data allowed themes, which seemed meaningful to me and to the DWs, to emerge and be identified. The emergent categories were arrived at through a combination of issues relating to the literature, initial hypotheses based on the case seen at Children's Clinics, recurrent themes of importance to the DWs interviewed and areas identified by the researcher as reflecting sites of struggle for parental autonomy. The emergent design was thus arrived at through a combination of induction and deduction, a process supported by Berg (1995) and Glaser and Strauss (1990).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conventionally, research results are presented prior to their being discussed. This is not appropriate within the context of a methodology which foregrounds reflexivity and the role of the researcher not only in interpreting the results but even in the way in which results are presented and selected. In the light of this, it is important to state at the outset that the results were surprising to me. This surprise undoubtedly affects the way in which I present and analyse the data. Based on clinical experience and my reading of the literature, I had expected to meet women who presented themselves as relatively powerless and lacking in autonomy. In general, I did not find this to be the case.

The interviews exposed an assumption related to the nature of involvement which I had not considered in formulating the research question. Secondly, in general they contradicted Cock's theory of powerless and helpless women in domestic work. In so doing they have provided an alternative understanding of DWs. This point will be illustrated in the reporting and discussion of the results below. In retrospect I could have anticipated the surprising findings to a degree - these DWs had managed to get themselves on national television independently and of their own free will. Even before my contacting them, there was evidence of their independent power and agency.

The results have been reported using the terms "respondent" and "parent" to refer to the DW. In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity reference to employers or children by name has been replaced with the terms "employer" and "child" respectively. Where extracts of dialogue have been quoted, "I" refers to the interviewer and the letters "A" through to "H" to indicate the respondent's responses.

The report and discussion of results will be organized in the following way. The findings on the reported nature of the involvement with the DWs child or children will be discussed first. This will include information on the extent to which the child or children are included in the daily living of the employer, the extent of the child's inclusion in the employer's family and the DWs feelings about this.

The second section will examine the extent to which the employer involvement with the child had affected the parenting and parental autonomy of the DW in some specific areas. This will be done by examining areas of overlap and dependence in parenting between DWs and employers. It will also examine areas of independence, autonomy and difference between DWs and employers.

The last section will discuss themes which emerge unexpectedly, and which are not directly linked to the area of parenting. They are findings that relate to having been socialised in a racially and culturally different community to that of the DW and her family.

## **NATURE OF EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CHILD OR CHILDREN**

The results in this area challenge the assumption that the nature of the involvement with employers was homogenous. In general, results show varying degrees of involvement with employers, and thus by implication, varying degrees of involvement in parenting.

### **Terms of address**

My inquiry into this area was motivated by the feeling that terms of address may begin to provide an indication of the differences between the child and DWs with regard to feeling comfortable and familiar with employers. I also hoped that it would begin to provide a starting point from which to judge whether the child experienced confusion around identification of the parent and how DWs felt about this. Terms of address however, did not seem to be a significant indicator of the relationship with employers as the results below will indicate. Results also indicated that most DWs' children did not experience confusion around identification of the primary parent.

In six of the cases, the DW and the child addressed the employer in the same way. Terms of address were derived through mutual agreement between DW and the employer. Terms of address for employers were either the employer's surname or first name, while DWs were addressed on their first names. The DWs report having no objection to their children's use of the agreed terms of address even though, children using first names to address adults was considered to be culturally inappropriate. This DWs explained as being acceptable given that

they were living in a different community with a different culture, that did not frown on using these terms of address:

There were two cases in which the terms of address used by the child and the DW differed. This was so with respondent G and respondent B. Respondent B reported having no problems with her addressing her employers as "master" and "madam" and with her child addressing them using their first names. She felt that this did not affect her relationship with her child or her parenting in any way.

Respondent G referred to her male employer as "boss" and the female employer as "madam", while her child called the male employer "daddy". Respondent G was amused by her child's use of this term of address for her male employer and reported that she had no problems with her child referring to the employer in this way. She however, did feel offended by the fact that her child had initially called the female employer "mom". Respondent G said:

Before...she see and say her (the female employer) like her mom. But I think now she can see I am her mum because even my sister just try to tell her: "This people is not your parent. This is your mother ".

(parenthesis added)

She seemed to have felt unrecognised and unacknowledged in her role as parent by her child's inability to recognise her as the primary parent. She had to correct the child and teach her that she, the DW, was the parent. To reinforce this, she insisted that the child call the female employer "madam", as the DW did. The child's perception of the employer as the parent may be indicative of some of the reasons for the difficulties which this DW had experienced in attempting to assert her parental authority. The child may have seen the employer as the primary authority in the household and thus the child undermined the DWs parental authority. The results in the categories below will further elaborate on this case.

Let us proceed to examine to what extent employers were involved in the daily activities of DWs and their children. This will provide a clearer indication of the nature of the employers' involvement in parenting the DWs' children.

### **Daily living**

The inquiry focused on involvement of the employer in the areas of sleeping, eating, leisure activities and recreation.

### ***Intense involvement***

Four respondents reported significant and intense interactions between the employers and their children. Three of these four respondents reported that their children regularly slept in the employer's home, while the DW slept in her own quarters, usually in the back of the main house and separate from the employers home. These respondents also reported that their children would occasionally have meals with the employers and their families. In two of these cases, DWs would be included in this eating arrangement. In the other two cases the child would eat alone with the employers family and the DW separate from them.

With regard to leisure activities, three respondents reported that their children were free to use and enjoy the facilities of the employer. This included access to computers, the swimming pool or the television inside the employers' home.

Three of these four DWs felt that their child's inclusion in the employers' family did not undermine their parental authority. When asked how the DW felt about her child's inclusion in the employers' family three respondents felt that they were happy and grateful for those interactions and involvement with the child. Respondent C, said:

I'm happy for that... I don't mind, really.

Respondent A said:

That for me is wonderful. I can see, as a big person, the actions and the love they give her...I am very reasonable for that....

The two respondents who reported that their children were granted greater access to the employers' homes than they themselves had, attributed their acceptance of this distinction to their perceptions of their primary role within the employers' family i.e. the role of DW. The DWs, in this household circumstance, discriminate between the roles that DWs and children play in the employers' home. The DWs see their roles as that of employees, and the children's roles as being different from this. They had no expectation of being included or involved in the employers' family and life with the degree of intimacy which was shown to their children.

The DWs seemed to feel that their inclusion, if it occurred, was a privilege rather than to be taken for granted, and that they had no right to demand it. They were however, grateful for the benefits that inclusion brought for their children. They said that there was some understanding of the ways in which DWs and employers usually related and interacted. This seemed to be the norm against which they judged their own employment conditions and experiences.

Respondent B, who was involved in the household beyond her DW duties, expressed herself in this way:

It (non - involvement in employers family ) wouldn't be hard for me because I am used to it. I am black. They are white. I am their servant. It doesn't matter really. They shouldn't involve me in their things

(parenthesis added)

Respondent A expressed similar sentiments:

I don't know for other people but for me, I am telling you they treat me like I am a domestic. I am working, but they don't treat me like a funny, you see. It's just different (treatment between herself and the child) because I'm working here

(parenthesis added)

Respondent G was very unhappy about the discriminatory treatment between herself and her daughter. She explained:

G : Sometimes they make some braai, they call her...They not calling me.....

I : You look very sad

G : .....(long silence and tears in her eyes).....because sometimes they call my baby. They must call me because it's my baby...and then they make me upset because I think they gonna take her from me. Because I come from a poor family. I haven't got my father...

I : Does it happen often that she is included and you're excluded

G: (nods)....

I : What do you do when that happens

G : I cry. Like every Sunday when they make some braai...but I try to take her somewhere and take her away...because she must know I am the mother

(parenthesis added)

She felt that the employer's inclusion of her daughter in their family, undermined her role as a parent and was destructive to her relationship with her child. She described why she felt that she was undermined as a parent:

- I : Why do you think that she thinks you're not her mother
- G : ...because like I can say sometimes she comes home with a letter from the school...she...she don't show me. She just go straight to the house and say, "Here's a letter from school" and then I don't see it ...For anything...if she want a pencil, she go to them and I hear from them the child needed it and they buy a pencil.
- I : I can see that makes you sad
- G : Yes because sometimes I get cross and then I ask "Why didn't you tell me ?" and then I beat her.

This DW's circumstances had been in keeping with my initial expectations of DWs having their parental authority undermined by both employers and subsequently by their own children, by virtue of the dual roles the DW was expected to play in this household circumstance.

Respondent G talked about her child being attracted to the material comforts offered by the employer's family and how she felt that this had developed into loyalty and identification with the employers at the expense of herself, the mother.

Although beating her child might be detrimental to the child, respondent G chose this way of asserting herself as the parental authority, as well by limiting the child's contact with the employer's family. When asked about what kind of involvement would be acceptable to her, she said:

I want her to know that (interaction with the employers), but not too much, because I want her to involve with me ...

(parenthesis added)

Thus it seems that in most cases where involvement with the DWs child was intense, the DWs perceived no threat to parenting or parental autonomy from this involvement, since employers are reported to support rather than attempt to take over DW parenting. In the case of respondent G, where this involvement was perceived as a threat, it seems that there are difficulties in the DW asserting herself as a parent in a context where she is primarily in a powerless position, that of DW.

### ***Moderate involvement***

Three of the DWs reported that they had regular involvement from the employer in the area of daily living. All three have their children sleep with them, with no crossing of that boundary.



With regard to eating, all three DWs took responsibility for this, usually had meals with their children and did not have the children having meals with the employer. This practice however seemed less rigid than the sleeping arrangement, with children occasionally eating with the employer and the employers family when circumstances demanded it. Respondent F described:

- F: ....but my child when he come from school, he's supposed to come in here (into the employer house) to get some breakfast with my madam's child at the table there and they eat. Then I set the table there....He will eat with the employers child sometimes and sometimes he will eat with us inside.
- I: So are there times when he has had supper at the table with the whole family ?
- F: Yes, only sometimes
- I: And how are they about that
- F: They are fine

(parenthesis added)

In reporting on daily living activities, these three respondents all spoke of their children doing these activities with the DWs. It was only after probing that it became apparent that there was involvement with the employers. Thus, spending time with the employer and in the employer's home seemed to be presented to the child as the exception rather than the rule, with the child knowing that ordinarily the mother / parent would perform those functions.

This consistency had the advantage of communicating to the child a sense of sameness between himself / herself and the DW. It may have served to minimize any sense of privilege and difference that may have emerged for the child; if his/ her treatment in the employers family and home were different from the way his / her mother were treated. In these three cases, however, the children did have some , but not frequent, interaction with the employers when it came to leisure activities and recreation. The kind of interaction here was related to employers assisting with lifts (when DWs attempts to arrange this failed), taking children to activities when the help was required by the DW and allowing children on occasion to watch television in their homes on occasion.

The DWs report this assistance as attempts to help rather than take over parental functions. Respondent E said:

It's like they just helping her with things. They not really taking over.

Respondent D felt that :

- D : They are very nice with them (the children)...but they are giving me help if I need it, that is the main thing  
I : So would you say that the employers are involved in bringing them up  
D : No! He's just helping, like to fetch them when I am working  
(parenthesis added)

These three DWs were all appreciative and grateful for the interaction and involvement that the employers had with their children. Once again these DWs seemed to see no threat to their parental autonomy due to the involvement from the employers. They also echoed the sentiment that employer involvement was an act of assistance rather than one of trying to take on the parental role.

### *No involvement*

The last respondent reported minimal employer involvement with her child. Eating, sleeping and watching television was done with her mother in her room, separate from the employer. The employer was also uninvolved in assisting the child with school activities or outings and any other recreational activities. This was however, the exception in the sample. Respondent H expressed herself like this :

No, she (the child) never sleep in the house. We eat at the back but I buy food for her. All my children, I buy food for them. Everything I take for them. Like the school take care myself. Ya, everything I help myself. She never help me there. She never do anything. I do everything for myself.  
(parenthesis added)

This respondent was very unhappy about the lack of inclusion of her child in the employer's home and her sense of hopelessness and powerlessness was expressed when she said:

I really like that (inclusion of the child) if it was like that. I can't force that because it's a house that's not mine and I can't change his heart to make what I want because I'm working, coming to work that's all...But I just happy because she doesn't fire me and she doesn't fire me and doesn't fire my children. I am happy for that...  
(parenthesis added)

Again the sense of the DW not being entitled to anything more than she got as a DW was prevalent and a clear definition of herself as being primarily a worker in this context was

dominant. The lack of involvement from the employer however, meant that parental authority was not threatened in any way and responsibility for the child was solely that of the DW.

### **Reasons for the child's inclusion**

This area was researched to determine what the DWs felt their employers' motivations were for including DWs children into their families. Most DWs felt that inclusion was due to employers' benevolence, while one DW felt that inclusion was due to the employers own needs, rather than for the needs and benefit of the child and the child's relationship with the DW.

Six of the DWs in the sample felt that their children had been included in the employers family and home due to the benevolence of the employer. Three respondents felt that in addition to this, their children had become so involved with the employers because their children presented qualities (like being clever, or being obedient) which the employer found attractive. Respondent D felt that her children were included for the following reason:

Because they did love him. They see that he is clever to do things like that.

Respondent A felt that:

They don't mind because they believe me and they believe with my children like to sleep inside depend how child behaved and how child is to discipline...You see the child is under the rules and then they say that the child can sleep inside.

Another factor which Respondent B felt contributed greatly to her child's inclusion in the employer's family was age at which the child joined the household and the duration of the involvement with the child. She said:

I'll tell you why because they have got their reasons because he actually grew up with them and they've seen him crawl, trying to walk, to talk and I mean....he is like, and I mean like the Granny in Knysna. They were here when he was born until they retired to Knysna and the employers had a holiday flat. So like when they go down there, then they will go for lunch at Granny's house and he is welcome to join them and to go everywhere they go really. The whole family, like the Granny and the brother at his house is also welcome. Like the other brother is overseas, buys presents also like for birthdays, he is included and they send him....He is part of the family.

One respondent (G) felt unhappy about the employers involvement with her child and attributed this involvement to fulfilling the employer's needs. She felt that they were including

The respondent (H), whose child was minimally involved with the employers, felt that her employer had difficulty in dealing with children and so found relating to her daughter difficult. She did however feel that the fact that they were black might play some role in her non - involvement, but did not feel that this was primary. She said:

My madam is not too happy, maybe because of black...but she is not so happy with the children but not for they only black. I can see she is not a happy lady for the children. She doesn't even care sometimes for the whites.

**Summary**

The extent to which employers have included the DWs children into their activities and lifestyles was by no means homogenous as the data indicates. The extent of involvement with DWs children seemed to range from superficial and minimal involvement, to deeper, more intense involvement.

An example of the former is respondent H, whose child is minimally involved with the employer. Examples of the latter more common in this sample. They include respondent A's reports of her grand daughter accompanying the employer's family to religious prayers, respondent F's reports of the employer taking her child shopping with her family, taking him to movies and providing medical attention for him when he was ill; and respondent B's reports of her son going away on holidays with the employer to visit the employers extended family.

In the majority of cases, involvement with the employer was not perceived as a threat to parental autonomy. The nature and extent of involvement and its perceived relationship to parental autonomy can be represented graphically in the following way:

Parental Authority = PA  
Employer = E

PA established	PA established	PA established	PA established	PA threatened
No involvement	Minimal involvement	Moderate involvement	Intense involvement	Over involvement
not represented	One DW	Three DWs	Three DWs	One DW

Given that the information above has provided some indication of the extent to which employers are involved with DWs' children, and whether or not this involvement is perceived as a threat to parental autonomy, let us proceed to examine in more detail whether how the DWs conducted themselves as parents and DWs in the household.

### **INITIAL EXPECTATIONS AND SUBSEQUENT FINDINGS**

As discussed above, I had expected to find that employer involvement with the DWs child or children would affect DW parenting and would be a negative experience for the DW in that it meant further entrenching of already unequal power relations.

Earlier research by Mange (1995) supported the findings of Cock (1987), that found that employer involvement in DWs' children's education and control over resources tended to weaken the parents' position. This seemed to happen since DWs did not have sufficient funds necessary for schooling at expensive schools and resulted in DWs feeling more dependent on employers and added to them feeling trapped.

The DWs who participated in this study generally found employer involvement with their children to be a positive experience both for themselves and for the children. In cases where involvement had been minimal (in this study only one respondent found herself in this situation), the DW expressed desire for greater involvement.

Most DWs were grateful and appreciative of the positive interactions that employers had with their children and for material benefits gained from this interaction. It would appear that the DWs in this study were not as dependent as earlier research on DWs would suggest. In general, the DWs in this sample have not felt that their position as parents had been compromised or threatened as a result of them being employed in the same household in which they parent. They report ways of parenting which suggests that to a large extent, they have asserted and maintained parental independence and authority despite employer involvement in parenting.

Let us look more closely at the areas of employer involvement and its impact on parenting.

## AREAS OF EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT

### Decision making

Findings in this study support those of Cock (1989) and Mange (1995) with regard to the nature of the relationship between DW and employer. The reports from DWs in the area of decision making are filled with contradictions. In this study they reveal paternalistic relationships that continue to exist between most DWs and employers. These relationships impact on the parental role in that decision making is often influenced by the feelings of the employer.

Five of the women in this study described situations in which decisions were made in consultation with the employer. Four of these DWs referred to this consultation in ways which suggested dependence on the employer and highlighted the contradiction of the DWs seeing themselves as making decisions independently. The DWs took full responsibility for the decisions made jointly.

One respondent (D) when asked about decision making with regard to her grandchildren; and how these decisions are arrived at, responded in the following way:

Me or her mother (we decide), over the weekends when we see her... the thing is I, wont ask them (the employers) because they are old. Only they (the employers) can tell me what to do then I can do by my own.

(parenthesis added)

Another respondent (C) said:

C: I say to the employer that I'm deciding to do this and this and she say if it's right "Yes", and if it's wrong "No". I'm not right to thinking its right to do things like this, you know" (The DW here was referring to her decision to send the child to a particular school).

I: So if there is disagreement, who usually is the one convinced during the conversation?

C: ...It's only me, you know.....

(parenthesis added)

Respondent G, unlike the other four respondents above, was aware of her lack of independence with regard to her decision making about her child. She said:

I never made it (decisions).....because I never have a chance to make a decision.....because I just hear from them what they say. They say " You must do this and that" and then I do it.

(parenthesis added)

Except for respondent G, who felt that her parental authority was undermined, these respondents did not feel that employer involvement in decision making was negative for themselves or for the children and did not feel as though they were compromising themselves as parents because of this involvement.

The other three DWs reported that they made decisions about their children independently from the employer. Two respondents had the experience of decision making independently of the employer. This study was unable to ascertain whether this was related to the nature of the employer or that of the DW or some factor completely independent of them. Nevertheless, these respondents had complete independence in making decisions and took responsibility for these decisions. Independence in decision making was reported to be respected by the employer. Respondent F describes how decisions about her child are made:

I : Did you make that decision(to send the child to a particular school) alone?

F : No, with my husband

I : And did the employers play any role in that decision making

F : No

I : What would happen if you wanted to send your child back home. Would you discuss it with them?

F : No. I don't tell them. I just discuss with myself and my husband

(parenthesis added)

The fact that this DW was married may be a factor contributing to her independence in decision making. In addition, this DW also had her own home nearby, where she spent weekends with her husband and her child. These factors may contribute to her independence in decision making.

Respondent E also reported having complete independence in decision making. She described:

I : So with regard to decision making how does that happen ?

E : Me, the mother I make the decisions

I : And you do this alone with all decisions

E : Ya, alone

A factor which may have contributed to her independence, was this DW having secured additional employment as a tea lady at a school for a few hours a day. This contributed to her income and made her less dependent on her employer for economic survival.

Respondent H at the time of the interview was making decisions independently since she had experienced the consequences of having her employer involved in a decision making without taking responsibility for her role in that decision. Although the situation to be described is being related to the parenting role, it also has inherent in it labour issues, which will not be addressed in this paper. The topic under discussion involved the DW's decision to send her child back to her home of origin to receive schooling there. The employer was opposed to this decision, insisting that the child remain with the DW and with the assurance that there would be financial assistance for schooling, which subsequently failed to be forthcoming. The DW was left with the situation of having to pay school fees that she could ill afford, the responsibility of having to raise a child when she had limited time available as well as having forfeited the opportunity of having her child cared for by family members who had both the time and enthusiasm to care for her at the time the decision was taken for her to stay with her mother 3 years ago.

From the above reports, it seems as though most DWs in this sample, whether dependent or independent in decision making were satisfied with the way things were and did report feeling threatened by the involvement of the employer in this sphere of their parenting. This was untrue for respondent G, who felt that employer involvement undermined her parental authority and further excluded her from her child's life.

### **Discipline**

All of the DWs reported that they took the responsibility of disciplining their children. Four of the DWs said that the employer was seldom involved in disciplining their children, while the other four felt that the employer did play a role in this regard.



The absence of employer involvement in disciplining was attributed to the DWs' feelings that their children did not need to be disciplined by the employers. Respondent D said:

No, my children are no naughty really. hey are not giving any trouble. Really they are not naughty...No. She never had to shout at them not even one day.

Respondent C echoed these sentiments, saying:

No (employer doesn't discipline them ) because it's just that they are nice kids.  
(parenthesis added)

Respondent C related a difficulty that she experienced due to the employer not consistently supporting her efforts to discipline her children. She related incidents of her not wanting her children to eat sweets before dinner and the employer giving her children sweets against her wishes, leaving her quite powerless to do anything about this act of obvious kindness to her children. What she seemed to be relating was that the employer's non - support of her disciplining techniques sometimes interfered with her efforts to maintain standards of discipline. She seemed to feel that these acts set her up as the one who was always negative and withholding, while the employer was set up as the giving and permissive one in the children's lives. Respondent C, however, felt that in general her efforts to discipline her children were not threatened or undermined by her employer's non - involvement.

The DWs who reportedly had their employers involved in disciplining their children felt that it was primarily their own responsibility. They had no objections to employers disciplining their children when the need arose, since it would be in the best interest of the child's socialization in the long term. Respondent B said:

But when it comes to punishment, I deal with it until maybe, and fortunately it has never come to that, that if I cannot handle it, you know teenagers, tomorrow it may explode, then something that I won't be able to deal with, then I will call for the male employer. But at this stage fortunately...

Respondent F, when asked about how she felt when employers disciplined her child, said:

No. I won't mind because they must. The kids must know they must not do this and that and they must know this is not right and this is right, you know

These respondents felt that employer involvement in disciplining did not threaten their parental autonomy and seemed to have felt that this involvement strengthened and reinforced their disciplining techniques by virtue of the consistency displayed by the employer.

Respondents said that they disciplined their children primarily by talking to them, giving them some sort of punishment like denying them the opportunity to take part in activities they enjoyed, or by expressing their anger to the children either by silence, shouting and sometimes hidings.

In one case the DW felt that at times giving her child a hiding was as a result of frustration from being in the job and being in circumstances which were uncomfortable and humiliating.

Respondent H said :

H : You see I don't like to shout too much because sometimes the child makes me very upset because I got quite alot on my mind and I think quite lot, so....but you know the childrens when they still small, they don't understand and they doesn't know what you're going through...and just make what she wants....Like sometimes she is naughty and just speak nicely to her and they understand, but sometimes (gestures with her hand)

I : You give a smack

H: Ya

I : It sounds like it's worse because things are so difficult here for you. I mean I just wonder if sometimes you are frustrated.

H : Maybe I think that, maybe,... but maybe not because I try to control myself, but you see the thing is that things don't go well for me.

(parenthesis added)

The feelings of this respondent suggested that the difficulties experienced in the DWs employment situation, impacted directly on the DWs ability to parent and particularly to discipline in a manner that was not detrimental to the child.

## Education

Seven of the DWs in the sample made the decision to send their children to particular schools in consultation with employers. Respondent F made the decision to send her child to a particular school in conjunction with her husband and independently of her employer. The employer, however, played a supportive role in assisting with travel arrangements to and from school, since the school was situated far from the employer's home.

Responsibility for assisting and supervising the children's homework was in all cases, taken by the DW. The seven DWs who all had young children said that because the children were still young, they were able to help them with work if they struggled. If they found the work too difficult, DWs described that they relied on assistance from the employer. Respondent F said:

- F : I was helping him (with homework) when he was here  
I : Does anyone else help him  
F : Yes, they (employer) help him, but mostly me I was helping him  
(parenthesis added)

Respondent C described:

They are still small and in smaller classes, so it is still easy for me now. But when it is difficult, I ask them (employers) and then even their Gran (employer's grandmother) she help me....  
(parenthesis added)

Respondent H, who had little involvement from the employer with her child, found that she also relied on the employer to assist with homework. She replied to the question, who helps your child with her homework:

- H : I try  
I : Why do you say try  
H : Because I go to Std 6 and sometimes the thing is ...you see I was on a school from the farm and it's not like the school from here. So sometime s I understand but sometimes I don't  
I : What happens when you don't understand  
H : I ask him, the lady to help him  
I : Sometimes...and my sister is sometimes coming here and I ask him to help her.

Thus all respondents in this sample found that the involvement of the employer in their children's education to be positive for themselves and for the children. None of the respondents felt that this involvement from the employer was detrimental to their position as parents and to their parental autonomy.

Four of the DWs, when speaking about their children's homework, spoke about their own low levels of education with some regret and expressed their wishes that their children would succeed due to better educational opportunities open to them presently. Respondent C said:

Maybe I see he is doing something wrong. His homework doing the mistakes. Now they, the boy do his homework and show me when he finished and then after I

signature his book and then I said "If you do wrong things, you know what I don't want you to go to the garden (referring to someone who works in the garden) and then I give you a plate of food only. You must found a good education. That is how I start because me, I am not educated." All the time they know, I'm told them.

(parenthesis added)

Respondent H expressed similar sentiments of regret:

See, I like my children they must be clever because I never be and they must get happiness and now it's not like I think

(parenthesis added)

Respondent D felt that above all else, she wanted her children to be educated. When asked about how she would want her children to identify themselves racially, she said :

They will choose for themselves but they must get educated ...full, then they can do what they want all of the because when I die, they must not walk in the street and be picking up papers. They must have something. If somebody lose that, they are losing his future. I want them to be educated, certificate, good so that if he loss job tomorrow, in the morning he can get another job

The sentiments expressed by these DWs support the feelings of Cock (1989), that DWs are highly invested in their children's education by virtue of the fact that they have not attained high educational levels.

## Summary

The results above have illustrated that there had been some employer involvement in parental functions of decision making with regard to the DW's children. However, according to most of the DWs, this involvement had in no way threatened their parenting or their parental autonomy. Involvement has in fact been seen as an act of benevolence and assistance. This was not so for respondent G, who felt that employer involvement in decision making undermined her authority as a parent and did not strengthen her position as the child's parent.

In the area of discipline half the sample report employer involvement and half do not. They report no major challenges of this involvement or lack thereof to their parenting and parental autonomy.

In the area of education, all the DWs reported employer involvement. All felt this was beneficial and in no way challenged their parenting and parental autonomy.

The results thus far reveal a generally satisfied sample, who despite relatively significant involvement from employers in parenting, have reportedly managed to maintain themselves as autonomous parents, independently from their role as DWs in the same household in which employers give the orders and they execute them.

Reports from the DWs thus far attributed this largely to the nature of the employers, being people who were kind, did not have malicious intent and had largely set themselves up in supportive roles to the DW as a parent. In the results thus far, DWs report employers assisting them rather than taking the lead in parenting their children. The implication of this however, is that parental autonomy and independence has been handed to the DWs by the employer and that the DWs have not acted to assert their parental authority. Discussions with DWs on the areas of non-involvement with employers has yielded results which suggest that the DWs were active in asserting and establishing themselves as autonomous and independent parents with a strong sense of difference from their employers. Let us proceed to examine how DWs have, through non-involvement with the employers, contributed to maintaining themselves as parents with autonomy and independence.

### **AREAS OF NON - INVOLVEMENT: INDEPENDENCE, AUTONOMY AND DIFFERENCE**

#### **Finances**

Contrary to the findings of Mange (1995), six of the eight respondents interviewed took full responsibility for school fees and tried as far as possible to minimize employer involvement in their financial decisions when it came to basic necessities, despite the employers obvious awareness of their financial positions.

Respondent A said:

They help me for money for the food but only money for the food, not for the school.

Respondent D said:

D : I pay alone (for school fees)

I : That must be pretty hard for you because you have two of them at school now

D : It is hard...really hard , but it happens (shrugs)...but we are paying for everything

(parenthesis added)

There was some evidence of involvement in the provision of information or handouts that could ease financial burdens. Examples were employers' information to the DW that schools provided rebates (as was the case with respondent C), referring the DW to schools whose fees were lower (as was the case with respondent G) or providing the child with old school uniforms used by the employers child when they were at school (as was the case with respondent D). This did seem to be the extent of involvement in matters financial.

One of the six respondents, respondent H, reported having no financial assistance from her employer not by choice or conscious decision, but through what she felt was a breach of promise. She described her situation:

The people here I am working for, they say they going to pay the children. I said "I can't afford the school from here " and they say they will help me ....and now I can't afford anything because my salary is too small. I try to reach what I am but it's too heavy for me and I can't take it (her child) back home because there's no-one to look after them now.

(parenthesis added)

Confrontation with the employer about the agreement was reportedly futile. In confrontation, the employer said that she was unable to increase her DW's salary and threatened that the DWs pursuing this would result in the employer having to sell her house. The net result of this action would be that the DW will be unemployed. This position made addressing the issue of salary increase impossible and further trapped this DW.

Respondent B was the exception to the six DWs above. She had significantly more involvement with the employer when it came to matters financial, expressed herself like this:

(I managed the school fees)...only with the help of this family, the employers family. They always helped me...I mean a no name like myself, I couldn't afford it. But this family was so good. They kept on saying money is no problem as long as he gets the best.

(parenthesis added)

It was interesting that even in this case where the employers took on most of the financial responsibility for this DW's child (since he had to go to private schools given that he was

growing up in this context during the apartheid years when black children were not allowed to attend white schools), she still described the financial involvement as assistance rather than the full financial responsibility of the employers. She spoke about giving as much money as she could toward his education but this amount was minimal since she had two other children in KwaZulu Natal to care for. This respondent seemed to have tried to retain her sense of pride and her belief in her ability to provide for her child by limiting financial involvement in other areas. She expressed that:

Sometimes I just make ends meet and I try not to involve them. Sometimes the child will want something and I will say "O God, I cant ! "; and then he'll say that he'll ask employer and I will say, " Don't you dare !"... Ya but there are difficult times, you know. Like I remember there was a certain show that was expensive and he wanted to go. I just said to him " Child, you cannot go. I cannot afford it and I don't want you to go to the employer"

Generally, these results seem to contradict Cock's findings of "dependent" DWs. Attempts by the DWs to act independently in the financial arena is indicative of this. My interpretation of these attempts to be financially independent, are indicative of DWs attempts to challenge their positions of dependence and powerlessness as workers within the employers household, by asserting themselves as independent and autonomous in other areas. I think that the area of finance is one such area in which DWs in this sample have attempted to address this challenge. By taking full responsibility or at least trying to take full responsibility for the basic necessities of their children, the DWs have managed to establish independence in an area which historically has served to foster dependence. The independence in this area contributes to the DWs feelings of autonomy and independence in parenting despite the involvement of employers in other areas of the child's life. Another such area of independence and autonomy is that of culture, which will be examined discussed below.

### **Culture and difference**

All respondents expressed that they felt that it was of utmost importance that their children learn about their culture of origin. Although they were grateful for the opportunities that living outside their traditional communities held in terms of a better education, access to resources and learning English, they nevertheless were emphatic on the importance of teaching their children about their own culture and their indigenous language.

Some of the reasons given for feeling so strongly about transmitting indigenous culture, was around providing the child with sense of his/her roots and history. Respondent F expressed herself on the issue of culture, in this way:

We must like it because it's our culture, you know, but.....it's different because the children they are born here and they grow up here and they don't know how you doing at home....I don't want him to forget my language"

Another DW (H) said:

Our black people will try to put the black culture behind them and just go to the white. But I don't like that because the children, they can't know where they coming from. We got quite a lot of different things ...I think even the white people, we after them for work and the school and for everything but they got their tradition that they know about. We don't know that and they never stop the children to know about that. They teaching their little children they must know what is their culture and that I like to teach my childrens too.... I like they must do what they like for the school and the work for the everything, but they must not lose it.

Another respondent expressed herself in this way and linked the need to teach her child about indigenous culture to his ability to deal with racism, through having developed a sense of pride in himself through identification with his community of origin.

He (her child) could tell me the other day that he was angry because these guys had called him a "kaffir". "What did you say about that ? ", (the DW asked her child). I told them that I am so proud to be a "kaffir". O God! Some way they do learn....so if you don't know who you are then you cannot really face the world.

(parenthesis added)

Respondent A also linked the importance of teaching her child about their culture to developing a sense of black pride. She said:

You must be proud of you and you must make you the one that born you. You don't have to wish to be something you never be.....Sometimes , you know, I see our children, they be in the school for white people. You say Hallo and they don't say hallo in our language. They not proud for the black. They want to be proud for the white. But really, I don't like it quite alot because you know everybody, I think got bring up and whatever you are you have to be strong for that...my child, she must also know that.

All the DWs children in the sample were able to speak their indigenous language, although only one of the DWs children was able to read their indigenous language. The DWs attributed this to their children's age and felt that they would learn to read as they grew older. This



seemed to be the case, seeing that the one child who could read his indigenous language was 15 years old.

From the results obtained, it seems as though the transmission of an indigenous language had to become a conscious and added parental task for DWs in this context. Respondent B explained how the need to teach her child her indigenous language arose. She said:

What happens is that his first word as a baby was English. Then I got a fright. I thought to myself "Oh my God ! What is happening? Is he gonna accept black people as his own or is he now going to be stuck in the middle". Fortunately it didn't work that way. He sort of coped. He was bad in Zulu, good in English. As he grew up, when we together, then it's Zulu and when we inside, then it's English and when I speak to him in Zulu, he will answer me in English. But like during the school holidays I went down to Natal with him, so he could mix with the family and it just worked out so well.

Thus for this respondent, as for four other DWs in the sample, teaching their indigenous language to their children had to become a conscious decision and could not be taken for granted, as it would have been if they lived in their communities of origin. This thus seemed to have become an added parental task, in which the employer could not participate. All DWs felt that the employer did not object or interfere with them transmitting this to their children.

In addition to teaching their children indigenous languages, the DWs also expressed their feelings on needing to teach their children about other aspects of their cultural heritage such as culturally specific behaviours. These included appropriate ways of addressing adults, behaviour appropriate for children and appropriate social interaction with people from the same indigenous group or race. Included in the DWs repertoire of teaching the child about their indigenous culture, were regular visits to the DWs community of origin.

In talking to the DWs about teaching their children about their indigenous cultures, strong themes of entrenching a sense of difference between themselves (and their children) and the employer (and the community in which they reside while in employment), emerged. In addition to this, the DWs seemed to couple this with reinforcing in the child's mind a sense of the initial purpose and the reason for being in the white community being primarily work related. There was also a sense of ownership and difference which emerged quite strongly in the ways in which the DWs describe the importance of their culture.

It may be that while parenting, the DWs' transmission of and emphasis on difference, ownership of indigenous culture and being in that context by need rather than by choice, may be factors which distanced the DW and her children from the employer and thereby aided in the children identifying themselves with the DW, rather than the employer, as parents.

All respondents felt that they were successfully providing their children with a sense of culture that was different from the cultural experience in the home of the employer. All DWs felt that the employers did not have objections or interfere with the transmission of these cultural teachings and all respondents felt that their children behaved in ways which they felt was culturally acceptable.

Thus it seems that in addition to trying to assert themselves as independent and autonomous parents, by trying to maintain financial independence, DWs have further established themselves as such by focusing in their parenting, on the transmission of culture. It is interesting that all DWs felt very strongly about this as an aspect of their parenting and at the same time, that this is not an area of parenting in which the employer can be involved.

It may be that the sense of difference and distance from the employer, which this aspect of parenting brings, may be a factor in assisting the DWs to see themselves as independent and autonomous parents.

However, this sense of distance also seems to be communicated to their children in the way in which the DW allows the child to interact with the employer and the surrounding context. The DW has distanced her children in two ways. The one way was through limiting access to employers resources and the other, was by encouraging a sense of belonging to the community of origin rather than belonging to the community in which they reside.

#### **Maintaining distance:**

##### ***Limiting access to resources***

It seems that for this sample of DWs, parenting was characterized by a sense of ownership and belonging to indigenous culture. By implication this emphasis had brought with it a sense of non-ownership of the employers' culture and by extension, a sense of non-ownership and non-

entitlement to the resources which the employer owns. This ownership / non-ownership seemed to set up a distance between the DW's unit (DW and child) and the employer's unit. The DWs seemed to have communicated this sense of difference and distance, not only theoretically, but also physically by maintaining distance between the child and the environment; through limiting access to resources which the employer would, according to reports, willingly have made available to the child.

All the DWs in this sample limited the children's access to the employers' resources in some way, with the extent of denial differing in each case. Limiting access to resources had been difficult and painful for the DWs, as children often do not understand their mothers' motivations. Respondent C described how she dealt with this issue with her children and how difficult it was:

- C : I Just told them (the children) : "You know guys everything you need sometimes, I manage each to bought for you. You must say thank you to me because I manage that. If I am not manage I will tell you. I don't want to get you upset or that or that, or you go to the employer to ask her". Because you know sometimes they see I am not going to give them money for this and this and they want money for the tuck shop. Today I say I'm not giving money for the tuck shop. I make the lunch tins and then the tuck shop, the employer gives them for sport or like that.....
- I : It must be hard for you because little children always want what they see other children have
- C : Yes, .....I can't manage to give all the time everything....You know because they don't care they go straight to the employer. They just go straight to her.
- I : That must make you feel angry
- C : What can I do...because the employer.....I'm sure if she was someone who was treating me (badly) or treating them (badly), they was going to be scared but they not scared.....ya , you know when you feel like I can get that but you can't manage sometimes it's hurting , you know

(parenthesis added)

Limiting access to resources was not restricted to financial resources and seemed to extend to other physical resources as well. Respondent D's now grown up son (M), who happened to visit her during the interview, had been brought up in the household conditions being researched. He explained how he as a child experienced being restricted (by his mother) in using the employer's resources:

- M : You do as child (want to use employers things) , you know. Like when they go on holiday, they give you the keys to the house and you want to go into the house. But my mother would say " No, no, no!"

- D : Yes I must stop them to go there  
M : Yes, my mother was always very careful not to give us too much freedom, because the employers are kind. We can do whatever in the house but we can't misuse the authority she gave to use her stuff.  
D : They must remember it is not their house  
(parenthesis added)

Another respondent (G), who felt very threatened by the involvement of the employer with her child also had established a distance between her daughter and the employer. She found that physically removing her child from the employer's home when they had family activities served to distance the child from the employers.

It would thus seem that limiting access to resources was a way of maintaining a distance between the child and the employer. At the same time this communicated to the child a sense of not being entitled to the resources offered by the employer, and access to resources was presented as a privilege to be enjoyed occasionally and not to be seen as a right. For respondent G this also served as an opportunity for the DW to assert her parental authority over her child, since she felt that this authority was being undermined.

Extra resources from the employer could potentially affect the child's relationship with the parent. This study did not obtain information on how the children felt about their parent and the employer in terms of preference of one above the other, but respondent D's now grown up child (M) spoke about his preference as a DW's child growing up in this context. The experience of his mother limiting access to resources resulted in a continual pull that existed for him wanting to be with the employers, rather than his mother. He explained:

I think I was always (more comfortable) with the employer for one reason. They would always make things so easy for you. They don't shout at you, but my mom will always shout at me. But that's like when I was still a child. You always avoid your parents because you know they are going to shout at you and you want to go where it's easy.  
(parenthesis added)

Respondent C described how her children would sometimes ask the employer for things despite the DW's instructions that they not do that. She described how the employer almost always gave in to the children's requests even though she knew that the DW forbade this. She said:

You know, they know. Even the employer she knows the thing is I don't want to spoil them. She knows that and then she tells them " You know guys today we going to be in trouble. Your mom don't want that"

This DW however, felt that when she was alone with her children she was able to speak with them about the event and punish them for disobeying her. However, she reported that despite this, incidents such as these often recurred. These interferences in disciplining, she felt did not affect her overall autonomy as a parent and though it may have been undermined on occasion, she felt that in general her parental autonomy was not threatened.

Limiting access to resources, although a difficult process to execute and enforce, seemed to be relatively successful in establishing and maintaining a sense of distance and difference within the household, between the employers' unit and the DWs' unit.

The other method that DWs seemed to use to distance themselves and their children from the context in which they lived, was by attempting to engender in their children, a sense of belonging and identification with their communities of origin. This however, seemed to be less successful than the denial of access to resources.

### ***Reinforcing connections with community of origin***

In attempting to distance and limit identification with the employer and that community, it seemed as though the DW had to provide an alternate community and culture with which the child could identify. This alternate community seemed to be the DW's community of origin.

All the DWs in this study reported that they sent their children "home" as often as they could depending on money and time available to do so. This study found that there were varying reported responses and level of the children's comfort to visiting indigenous communities and extended family, depending on: a) who the family members in the communities of origin were; and b) the levels of the child's comfort in the employers home.

Four respondents reported that their children were more comfortable in their communities of origin than they were in the employers' households. Respondent H attributed this to the fact that she was very restricted in the home of the employer and experienced a sense of freedom when they were away from the employer's home.

Also, in cases where children were being cared for by their grandmothers and visiting home meant seeing their parents, children were reported to seem more comfortable in these communities for longer periods of time. This was the case with the children of respondent A, respondent D and respondent F.

However, despite the reported comfort at being "home" there was some evidence of the children's ambivalence at being in the communities of origin. There were reports that the children felt that they were spending too much time in the communities of origin and always wanted to return to the employers' household. Deciding what the child might prefer in terms of residential location was extremely difficult for these respondents.

Respondent A expressed her difficulty and the "heaviness" of having to think about where the child is most comfortable. She expressed herself like this:

I think the child is more comfortable....I, mean, let me explain you now. You go to boarding school, it's like boarding, you see. At boarding school, you going to learn. It's where you going to learn and that's what you want. You can feel comfortable at home or with your granny, but more important, you want to learn. You like this but your heart still want to open the books and you like it. You want to be at school. There you just visit, you understand me. That is you family but more important, you want to learn. Comfortable is you just want to see you family but you want to come back because you happy there where you learn. You happy there also but you happy because you learn. Like there she's happy but when the time comes she wants to go back, you see. It's uncomfortable now and she wants to be there. I can't tell you it's there and there. That question is really heavy

This respondent had expressed her difficulty at thinking about the possibility that her grandchild may prefer not being with her own family, a possibility which is extremely difficult for this respondent to consider. Respondent F also expressed her child's ambivalence saying:

He likes them (his family) very much, you know but when he's there, he doesn't want to come here and when he's here he doesn't want to go there.

(parenthesis added)

It would seem that despite reports from the DWs that their grandchildren are most comfortable in their communities of origin, contradictory reports may suggest children's ambivalence at being in communities of origin.

In the four other cases, all DWs reported their children's reluctance to remain in the communities for extended periods of time and reported their children wanting to return to the employers home, rather than spend time in the place that their mothers regarded as home.

Respondent C said:

They happy when we going and after a week, they say "no, it's boring here now . We want to go back again."

Respondent B said:

...as far as (my child) is concerned, this is home. If I went to my child now and told him that our home has been blown up or something and we don't have a home, we are here. I know what he would say. Because I remember the last time he told the employer, he gave him a card, 'I love you so much. I know that one day I have to leave this house but that doesn't mean that when I leave it will be over. You have been like a family to me'. So you know, from that I can see that he knows that this is home (parenthesis added)

Respondent G was asked about where she felt her child felt more comfortable, she responded after a long silence:

...I think with them because when their (the employers') family is here, she is more comfortable and when we go down to my sister she always said 'we can go now'.

### Summary

From further investigation and analysis of the results, it would appear that the DWs ability to assert and maintain their parental autonomy was not just the result of their passivity as a recipient of their employers' good will and benevolent intentions not to interfere with her parenting, but also the result of their (the DWs') active participation in asserting their independence and autonomy as a parents.

It seems as though the DWs in this sample have done this through attempting to provide at least the basic necessities for their children and have attempted as far as possible to maintain their financial independence.

In addition, all the DWs in the sample have expressed their feelings on the importance of instilling in their children with a sense of their cultural identity. Important in this area was the fact that employers were absent from this aspect of parenting and DWs were completely autonomous in this area. Transmitting a sense of cultural identity to the child developed a

sense of distance between the child and the employer which was encouraged by DWs through limiting their children's access to resources.

This sense of difference seems to be emphasised by DWs parenting in a culturally specific way. Since this implies employer absence from parenting in this sphere and highlights the sense of difference between the child and the employer, it serves to maintain a sense of distance from the employer, the employer's family and community context. DWs in this sample also attempted to engender in their children a sense of belonging to and identification with their communities of origin.

My interpretations of the results above have led me to the conclusion that the DWs in this sample have had no need to become autonomous in response to the interference from employers, as I had initially assumed would have been the case. The assumption that employers were malevolent and destructive was an incorrect one. The results have generally pointed to benevolent and kind employers, eager to assist their DWs where they can.

However, the results have also illustrated that, contrary to Cock's (1989) and Mange's (1995) research, DWs were not completely dependent and powerless within the employment context. The results have illustrated that this assumption was incorrect. The DWs in this sample were active constructors of their worlds and they have applied themselves to the difficulties of raising their children in a foreign context, in a way which suggests their independence of thought and action. This independence has served to assert and maintain them as autonomous parents while working and parenting in their employers' homes.

During the research process, data emerged which was not directly relevant to the topic under investigation. Themes around differing notions of "home" emerged between the DWs and their children, as well as reports on the children's adaptation to the context in which they reside. The information around these two emergent themes will be discussed below since they provide insight into the differences that have emerged between DWs and their children due to living in this household and community context.



## EMERGENT THEMES

### Differing notions of home

Closely linked to contact with extended families and communities was the notion of “home” that all DWs expressed. All the DWs in this study felt very strongly that the places where they spent most of their time, namely in residence at the home of the employer, was not their home. They all felt that home was the place in which they were born and where they had families to which they belonged.

Respondent A expressed her feelings like this:

You can say that it (residence during employment) a home also but...lets we can put this way. We can say this is home, but we call home where we born. It's where if I'm sick, it's not a home. If I'm sick I gonna be here and then you take me there forever, you see. I gonna take everything and then going home. Here is only where I'm working. I spent alot of time here but if something wrong, home is where you born. Here is where I'm working.

Another respondent (B) felt that:

- B : Home is home. It might be tatty but home is home. That is why we can give these kids the best education ever but we would like them to know where they come from.....Whenever I go on leave and it's not school holidays I leave him. If he's sick I don't have to worry about that because they will treat him exactly as I would have, so I don't have a problem with that . They are really so nice, they will do exactly what I would for him. But still this is not home...Home is being with your own people.
- I : But you've been saying that in a way the employers are like your own people
- B: What can I say? It's like being stuck between 2 cultures maybe. I don't know if the explains it. And then you are stuck but you know which side you come from and where you belong....but I cannot put it into words.

The DWs all expressed an emotional connection with home despite the fact that minimal time was spent there. They expressed a sense of ownership of a place where one belonged, in which one was the same as the community in which one lived and in which one was comfortable. These properties seem to be highly significant to the DWs and seem to provide a sense of security which may have become more important given the mobility of their work.

Three of the women in the study reported that they could say with certainty that their children regarded the residence of the employer as home. Respondent C tells of her debating about this in jest:

Because the kids they are asking when you build our new home, where are you going to build it because us I'm sure we're not going to stay at home. I said "No I'm going to build myself at home. If you want to stay here in Gauteng, you're going to do it yourself".

She however, expressed a very real concern after telling the story:

You know, it's confusing that sometimes...It's the thing I tell myself. If maybe I can lose my job and I found another people, these kids I can't take them home. At home they just want to go a long weekend and that is enough for them

Three other respondents felt that they could not, with certainty, say how their children defined home. These three however, all expressed that the children, when visiting the DWs home, would insist on returning to their lives in the city. All three women also expressed no major concern around this and felt that their children had to make up their own minds about where they wanted to be located in future. What was of importance to the DW was that they provided that child with a good sense of his or her own cultural heritage, a sense that they hope the child will internalise.

The issue of the child's relationship with the community of origin, has highlighted differences which had developed between DWs and their children in perceptions of home and in the context of the child having lived in the employer's home and in a racially and culturally different community. This had led to information emerging around the issue of the child's adaptation to the household circumstances and the implications of living outside one's community of origin. The issue of adaptation will be discussed below.

### **Child's adaptation**

#### ***School performance***

Four of the DWs reported that their children were doing well at school and that they were satisfied with their performance at school. Respondent C felt that her second child was doing poorly in English when he first started at the school, but had subsequently improved and was reported to be doing well.

Two of the DWs felt that their children needed additional input to assist them with learning in English. Respondent D was providing extra lessons for her child in English and said that she was receiving also receiving extra tuition in mathematics. Respondent H felt that her child

needed extra tuition in English and in mathematics but was unable to afford these extra lessons. She was extremely worried about her child's school performance as she had already been placed in a special class and was not showing signs of academic improvement.

Two of the DWs linked the importance of their children's education to their lack of opportunity in this regard and placed educational achievement above racial identity.

Respondent D said:

I did ask God that I need my children to be educated because it is difficult for me now....in this life with people who are not educated. With the people who are educated, they are doing more and more...they must get educated.... full, then they can do what they want. All of them because when I die, they must not walk in the street and be picking up papers. They must have something. If somebody have that they are losing his future. I want them to be educated. Certificate, good ...so that if he lose his job tomorrow, in the morning, he can get another.

Respondent C also spoke about how she always linked her children's education to her own lack thereof. She said:

It's me starting to them (her children ) about it. Maybe I see he is doing wrong. His homework, doing the mistakes. Now they, the boy do his homework and show me when he finished and then after that I sign his book and then I said "If you do the wrong things, you know what I don't want you to do the garden and then I give you a plate of food only. You must find a good education". That is how I start because me, I am not educated. All the time they know that, I told them.

(parenthesis added)

### ***Emotional functioning***

Five of the respondents reported that they felt that their children were all well adjusted and had reported that they had no major problems with their children. Six reported that their children were confident. Two of these attributed this to the relationships that the children had with the employers. Respondent A replied in the following way when she was asked what relationships had contributed to the child being this way:

I think...you know where the child live. If this people, the owner of the house, don't show a love, she can't be happy. I can see it's that. The most is that. I can see when she goes inside, it's no funny and they don't talk funny because when they talk like a funny person to her then she can't be comfortable.

Respondent G also attributed her child's confidence to the employers, saying in response to the same question, after a very long silence:

.....it's them (the employers)

(parenthesis added)

Acknowledging the influence of her employers on her child's emotional development reinforced respondent G's negative feelings about herself as an inadequate mother and although acknowledging the usefulness of employer input in her child's life, she felt that their relationship with her child had been destructive of her relationship with the child.

This respondent, along with respondent H, was also one of the two DWs who reported that they felt that their child had severe and unmanageable behavioural problems. She reported that her child was difficult to control, was disobedient and displayed significant restlessness and over activity. Although verification of this report from other sources goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, it would be interesting to inquire whether this was experienced in any other sphere of the child's life, or if it was specific to the relationship with her mother. This information would provide some indication of whether the child's behaviour was related to the employer's reported undermining of the DW's role as mother in the child's life.

The other respondent who reported difficulty with her child was respondent H. She reported that her child had been bedwetting for three years. The child had reportedly been seen by a doctor who prescribed medication on a number of occasions. The bedwetting reportedly ceased for a short period and then resumed after a few days.

Although both these cases need to be thoroughly investigated, the factors common to both these cases are outlined below:

- 1) Difficult relationship between mother and child
- 2) Bad employer / employee relationship
- 3) Degree of emotional involvement with the child
- 4) Lack of support / assistance from employer for DW

Both these cases were referred to Children's Clinics for the reported problems to be dealt with holistically and thoroughly.

### ***Definition of parent***

In all of the cases, the DWs reported that their children presently experienced no confusion with regard to whom they defined as their parent, in all cases defining the DW as their mother. There was however, one case in which the DW (respondent G) reported her child having experienced some confusion in this area. She said:

G : Before...she see her like her mom, but I think now she can see I am her mom. Because even my sister just try to tell her', "This (employers) people is not your parent. This is your mother "

I : Why, did she think that they were her parents.

G : I think like before, when she was small, he was living inside and they make her everything...like food and clothes and everything...and just take them like her parent

(parenthesis added)

All DWs reported that their children were loyal to them and would not reveal their mothers' private matters to the employer and would also not reveal employers' private matters to the DW. All DWs also reported that there had never been occasion when the child would use the employers' authority against the mother, or occasion when they would use the mothers' authority against the employer.

### ***Racial identity***

Six of the DWs felt that they were not sure how their children identified themselves racially and also felt that their children would decide in the future since its importance was decreasing with the present social changes.

Respondent D saw the decreasing importance of a racial identity as positive:

You know, I think they are lucky because they don't grow like us, scared the white person and like that you know

Respondent F said about her child:

But really he is black but as we go further, I don't know what is going to happen.

Respondent E echoed similar sentiments:

I don't know yet, that's (racial identification) up to her. It's just her choice.

(parenthesis added)

Respondents A and H felt that their children thought of themselves as black and felt that this would be important in the long term for a secure sense of belonging.

### ***Peers***

All DWs reported that their children mixed and socialized with both black and white children. They reported that the children showed no preference for any particular racial group.

In terms of economic distinctions, the DWs also reported that their children socialized with rich children as well as poor children, making no distinction between them or showing any preference.

### **Summary**

The decision to have their children with them in the employers home has brought with it obvious material gain, but seems also to have brought with it the need to sacrifice certain aspects of parenting that would ordinarily be taken for granted.

These sacrifices included the DW having to solely carry the responsibility of transmission of the indigenous culture to the child, and also meant that the cultural transmission had been somewhat diluted by virtue of the absence of community reinforcing. One aspect of "dilution" that emerged in this study, was that differences encountered between the DW and their children in terms of the places they defined as home and where they felt more comfortable.

The children in this study seemed to have adapted relatively well to the context, with the DWs having made the necessary arrangements to address factors contributing toward poor school performance. The children with behaviour problems, were referred to Children's Clinics to assist with these problems.

In general however, it seems that the circumstances under which these children have been brought up has yielded more positive than negative gains which no doubt will benefit these children in the long term.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS**

The results suggested that the nature of employer involvement with DWs' children was by no means homogenous and that the level of involvement varied from case to case. Results have further suggested that in most cases where the DW's child lived with the her on the employer's premises there had been involvement of the employer in parenting and raising the DW's child.

The nature of employer involvement was assessed in the areas of daily living, examining the areas of activities such as sleeping eating, involvement in leisure activities and recreation. In these area the majority of DWs reported involvement from employers, ranging from moderate involvement to intense involvement, with only one DW reporting minimal involvement.

Of the DWs experiencing involvement from employers, the majority were positive about this interaction and did not feel that this involvement in any way threatened their parental authority or interfered with their parenting style. Most DWs understood the participation of employers as attempts to assist and support them in their parenting efforts rather than to undermine them as parents.

Findings have illustrated that there are areas in which employers are involved in parenting and also areas in which the DWs parent exclusively and independently.

#### **Areas of involvement**

Decision making, discipline and education were reported to be the areas of employer involvement in parenting the DW's child. However, the level of involvement differed in these areas as well.

With regard to decision making the majority of DWs were satisfied with the status quo on the process of decision making irrespective of whether employers were involved or not. They did not feel that their parental autonomy was in any way being undermined by the employers'

involvement or non-involvement in decision making. Again respondent G is the exception, feeling that her parental autonomy was being undermined. She felt that she was absent in decision making and was merely informed of her employers' decisions regarding her child.

The area of discipline also did not present homogenous results. Once again most DWs were satisfied with the status quo in their household and did not feel that employer involvement or non-involvement in discipline threatened their parental autonomy.

In the area of education, all DWs took full responsibility for supervising their children's homework. There were reports from these DWs that employers assisted with homework on occasion. All DWs felt that in the future, they could rely on their employers to assist their children with homework which they found too difficult. There were no DWs who felt that their parental autonomy was threatened by this involvement from the employer.

In all three areas there is some evidence of dependence on the employers. None of the DWs however experienced this dependence as problematic for themselves as parents or as workers, and did not express any sentiments around this dependency contributing to them feeling trapped. The DWs seem to perceive the involvement of employers as positive for themselves as parents as well as beneficial to the child.

The findings in this area were also surprising in that DWs did not present themselves as being threatened, helpless or powerless as parents in this household, despite the involvement of employers in parenting. This seemed to suggest that DWs felt that they did have some measure of control and power in the area of parenting which gave them a sense of being autonomous as parents. The DWs ascribe their feelings of security and autonomy to the benevolence, non -interference and non - threatening nature of the employer. However the results suggested that the sense of autonomy and power which the DWs possessed, may also have developed from their independence and autonomy in parenting in areas in which employers were not involved.

#### **Areas of non - involvement**

The areas of non-involvement were located in the areas of finance and culture. Findings show that all the DWs in the sample have tried as far as possible to take financial responsibility for at



least their children's basic necessities. This can be seen as the DWs' attempts to challenge their dependence on employers in other areas by establishing their independence in the area of finance, which historically has served to foster dependence.

Another area of independence in parenting seems to have been the emphasis that all DWs in this sample have placed on the importance of culture in rearing their children. This emphasis may be an indication of the need to establish the DW as independent in parenting, but also serves to establish the DW as different from the employer. In establishing a sense of difference between the DW and the employer, an identification of sameness may develop between the child and the DW, creating a sense of difference between the DW and the child as a unit and the employer as a separate and different unit. This sense of difference creates a sense of distance between the two units, which may contribute to the DWs sense of autonomy in the area of parenting.

This sense of cultural difference was reportedly fostered by the DWs to give their children a sense of belonging. Results suggested that this also served to provide the DWs with the power to assert themselves as autonomous parents in a dominant culture which may have threatened their independence as parents, were it not for their creation of a sense of difference and distance from the dominant culture.

The DW's power as a parent seemed to be exercised through limiting their children's access to the employers' resources, and in this way maintain the distance between the employer and the DW unit. The other way in which DWs seem to have asserted their power was through insisting that the child or children have frequent and close contact with their communities of origin. This relationship with communities of origin has highlighted some of the differences between the DWs and their children. One of these differences relates to notions and definitions of home.

Despite the attempts by DWs to have parented in culturally specific ways, having grown up in a white community seems to have developed areas of difference between the DW and her child or children. One such area of difference has been differences in the DWs' perceptions of home and their children's perceptions of home. All DWs felt that their homes were in their communities of origin, while their children differed. Some DWs reported that their children

saw the employers' residence as home, while others were not sure how their children defined home. Only one respondent expressed concern around this differing perception and felt that in the event of losing her job, she could not return her children to her community of origin, since they would not be comfortable there. Most DWs however, felt that once their children were grown up they could decide for themselves where they wanted to be and wanted to live.

Findings in this study have also suggested that children's adaptation to this household arrangement was generally good. The cases in which DWs needed to be referred to Children's Clinics emerged in the extreme cases in this sample, i.e. the case of minimal involvement with the employer and the case of over involvement with the employer.

It will have been noted that respondent G consistently expressed unhappiness about her situation. It is therefore worth considering her case in more detail.

### **Respondent G**

The majority of the respondents in this study experienced employer involvement in parenting as non threatening. These findings are however, not generalisable as the responses of respondent G has indicated.

This case illustrates that the general conclusions regarding the nature of the employer employee relationship in domestic work may not always be as unproblematic as this study suggests. Further investigation of this case may reveal what the precise difficulties in this household are.

Respondent G was however, found to be lethargic, excessively tearful and inattentive. It occurred to me that this respondent might be depressed. This case illustrates that there may be other factors that might relate to the DW's parental functioning, like for example the DW's mental state.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Since this area of research is new and no literature is available directly on the topic, this study has had to draw on information from a number of areas and use this information to extrapolate the research question. It may thus seem as though there is only indirect connection between

the literature reviewed and the results. That seeming lack of connection however, could not have been overcome and is indicative of exploratory research.

The interviews were conducted in English, when this is not the first language of any of the respondents. As discussed earlier financial and time constraints dictated that interpreters could not be used. Nevertheless, the fact that the respondents might have experienced difficulty in responding to interviews in English needs to be considered and borne in mind when reading the results.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH**

This study has highlighted the paucity of psychological research that has been done on DWs in general and specifically on DWs in the parenting role. This gap in the psychological literature suggests that future research should focus on DWs and their parenting behaviour. This may provide greater insight into DW experiences and the psychological issues of relevance which need further investigation.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE**

These findings are significant since they challenge the existing literature and its portrayal of the employers of DWs as being closed to seeing the DW outside of her role as DW. The stereotype of the malevolent employer has been challenged by the positive experiences that these DWs have had with their employers through the beneficial and supportive interactions that they have had with their children.

This change in perception is one which clinicians have to bear in mind in dealing with cases of this nature. The assumptions which clinicians bring into the therapy room need to be questioned in treating cases of this nature. Clinicians need to evaluate cases on their own merits and need to be open to the possibility that this alternate household arrangement may be a positive reaction and adaptation to circumstances which would ordinarily keep the DW and her child or children apart.

Clinicians need to be reflexive in treatment of "families" such as these and carefully monitor their own assumptions in assessing and treating cases of this nature, since imposing one's personal objectives may not be in the best interest of the case.

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In conclusion the findings of this study suggest that employer involvement with DWs children is not homogenous and varies from case to case. The DWs in this sample have however not experienced the involvement of employers as a threat to their parental autonomy but have seen employer involvement as beneficial and advantageous to themselves as parents and to their children.

DWs have however established themselves as different, independent and autonomous in their emphasis in parenting in culturally specific ways. This seems to have allowed them to assert themselves as independent and autonomous parents, despite employer involvement in their parenting.

Despite the contradictions and differences that emerged between DWs and their children, the findings of this study have challenged the conventional notion of power and the perception of DWs as powerless victims. The findings of this study confirm Burman et al's (1997) notions that power is not only repressive but also productive and that power is not static and outside the individual, but dynamic and prevalent within interaction. The results support the idea that power is not uni-directionally exercised and has illustrated ways in which DWs have asserted their power and authority within an oppressive system. It seems as though the exercise of this power, rather than being placed in a position of power, allowed the DWs to assert and maintain themselves as autonomous parents within the employers' household.

## REFERENCES

- Alexander , J. , & Curtis , C. M. (1996) . A review of empirical research involving the transracial adoption of African American children. *Journal Of Black Psychology*, 22 (2), 223 - 235.
- Allan , G. A., & Skinner , J. C. (1991) . *Handbook for research students in the social sciences*. London: Falmer Press.
- Bannister , P. , Burman , E. , Parker , I. , Tindal , M. , & Tindall, C. (1994) . *Qualitative methods in psychology: A research guide*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Beard , P. N. G. , & Gaganakis , M. (1991) . Perceptions of black pupils in non-racial private schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 11 (3), 114 - 118.
- Berg , B. L. . (1995) . *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. ~~Massachusetts:~~ Allan and Bacon.
- Bornstein , M. H. (1991). Introduction : Approaches to parenting in culture. In M. H. Bornstein (ed.) , *Cultural Approaches to Parenting* (pp. 1 - 17) . New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Incorporated Publishers.
- Brannen , J. , & Wilson , G. (1987) . *Give and take in families: Studies in resource distribution*. London: Allen and Unwin Publishers.
- Burman , E. , & Kottler , A. , & Levett , A. , & Parker. I. (1997) . Power and discourse: Culture and change in South Africa. In A. Levett , A. Kottler , E. Burman , I. Parker. (eds.) , *Culture, power and difference: Discourse analysis in South Africa*. (pp. 1 - 14 ) . Cape Town: University Of Cape Town Press.
- Central Statistical Services. (1997). *Population Census Bulletin of Statistics*. Government Printers: Pretoria.
- Charlton , S. M. (1994) . *Domestic workers accommodation: Emerging issues*. Unpublished architecture masters thesis, University of Natal, Durban, South Africa.
- Christie , P. (1990) . *Open schools: Racially mixed Catholic schools in South Africa 1976 - 1986*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Cock , J. (1980) . *Maids and Madams*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Cock , J. (1989) . *Maids and Madams : Domestic Workers under Apartheid*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press Ltd.
- Comer , J. P. , & Poussaint , A. F. (1992) . *Raising black children*. New York: Plume Printing.

- Dawes , A., & Donald , D. (1994) . Understanding the psychological consequences of adversity. In A. Dawes & D. Donald (eds.) *Childhood and adversity: Psychological perspectives from South African Research* (pp. 1 - 27 ) . Cape Town: Clyson Printers
- De Berry , K. M. , & Scarr , S. ,& Weinberg , R. (1996) . Family racial socialization and ecological competence: Longitudinal assessments of African American transracial adoptees. *Child Development*, 67 (5), 2375 - 2399.
- Delpont , E. (1990) . The skeleton in the kitchen. *Codicillus*, 31 (2), 4 -15.
- \* Delpont , E. (1996) . The legal position of domestic workers: A historical perspective. *Codicillus*, 37 (2), 27 -35.
- Doherty , W. J. (1991) . Family therapy goes post modern. *Family Therapy Networker*, 15 (5), 38-43.
- Foster , D. (1986) . The development of racial orientation in children: A review of South African research. In S. Burman , & P. Reynolds (eds.) , *Growing Up in a Divided Society* (pp.158 -183). Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Foster , D. (1994) . Racism and children's intergroup orientations: Their development and the question of psychological effects on minority group children. In A. Dawes, & D. Donald (eds.) , *Childhood and adversity: Psychological perspectives from South African research* (pp.220 - 239 ) . Cape Town: Clyson Printers.
- Friguglietti , R. S. (1989) . *Domestic workers: Dependency versus self assertiveness in the workplace*. Unpublished research psychology master's thesis , University of Pretoria , Pretoria , South Africa.
- Glaser , B. C. (1978) . *Theoretical sensitivity*. U.S.A.: Sociology Press.
- Glaser , B. C. (1992) . *Basics of grounded theory analysis*. U.S.A.: Sociology Press.
- Glaser , B. C. & Strauss, A. L. (1967) . *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine Publishers.
- Gobodo , P. (1990) .Notions about culture in understanding black psychopathology : Are trying to raise the dead ? *South African Journal of Psychology*, 20 (2), 93 - 98.
- Gonzales , R. C. , Biever , J. L., & Gardner , G.T. (1994) . The multi- cultural perspective in therapy: A social constructivist approach. *Psychotherapy*, 30 (3), 515 -524.
- Grosset, M. (1998) . Conditions for domestic workers are poor. *Citizen*, July 28.
- Guba , E. G. (1990) . *The paradigm dialogue*. California: Sage Publications

- Guba , E.G. , & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989) . *Fourth generation evaluation*. London: Sage Publications.
- Guba , E.G. , & Lincoln, Y. S. (1985) . *Naturalistic inquiry*. California: Sage Publications.
- Heron , J. (1981) . Philosophical basis for a new paradigm. In P. Reason , & J .Rowan (eds.) , *Human inquiry: A sources book of new paradigm research* (pp.19 - 36). New York: John Wiley.
- Hick , G. (1988) . *An investigation into the knowledge and use of parent training in South Africa*. HSRC, Pretoria: Quality Printing Services.
- Hickson , J. , & Strous , M. (1993) . The plight of black South African women domestics: Providing the ultra-exploited with psychologically empowering mental health services. *Journal of Black Studies*, 24 (1), 109 - 122.
- Jahoda , G. (1984) . Do we need the concept of culture ? *Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology*, 15 (2), 139 -151.
- Johnson , P. R. , & Shireman , J. F. , & Watson , K. W. (1987) . Transracial adoption and the development of black identity at age eight. *Child Welfare*, 6 (1), 45-55.
- Jones , J. P. , & Natter , W. & Schatski , T. R. (1993) . *Post modern contentions: Epochs , politics , space*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Katzman , D. M. (1978) . *Seven days a week: Women and domestic service in industrialising America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kedijang , M. (1990) . *The best kept secret: Violence against domestic workers*. Unpublished manuscript, Project for the study of violence, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
- Kerlinger , M. (1986) . *Foundations of Behavioural Research*. London: Rinehart and Winston.
- Kotze , J. C. (1993) . *In their shoes : Understanding black South Africans through their experiences of life*. Kenwyn: Juta.
- Leary , K. (1994) . Psychoanalytic problems and post modern solutions. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 68 (3), 433 - 463.
- Lee , R. M. & Renzetti , C. M. (1993) . *Researching sensitive topics*. London: Sage Publications
- LeVine, R., & Dixon, S., & LeVine, S., & Richman, A., & Liederman, P. H., & Keefer, C. H., & Brazelton, T. B. (1994) . *Child Care and Culture: Lessons from Africa*. United States of America: Cambridge University Press.

- Makatile , D. (1996) . My two moms - the maid and madam. *Drum*, 218 , 18 - 24.
- Makhudu , Y. N. (1989) . The psychological effects of apartheid on black South African women domestics. *Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development*, 17 (3), 134 - 396.
- Makosana , T. Z. (1989) . *The Working Conditions of African Domestic Workers in Cape Town in the 1980's*. Unpublished sociology master's thesis , University of Cape Town , Cape Town , South Africa.
- Mange , N. D . (1995) . *Experiences African domestic workers undergo as a result of sending their children to predominantly white schools*. Unpublished psychology master's thesis , University of Cape Town , Cape Town , South Africa.
- Marshall , S. (1995) . Ethnic socialization of African American children: implications for parenting, identity development and academic achievement. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 24 (4), 377 – 396.
- Mboya , M. M. (1995) . A comparative analysis of the relationship between parenting styles and self concepts of black and white high school students. *School Psychology International*, 16 (1), 19 – 27.
- Mboya , M. M. (1995) . Variations in parenting practises: Gender and age related differences in African adolescents. *Adolescence*, 30 (1) , 955 - 962.
- Miles , M. B. , & Huberman , M. A. (1994) . *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded source book*. London: Sage Publications.
- Miller , V. (1984) . *Images of retirement: An exploratory study among black domestic and service workers*. Natal: University of Natal Printers.
- Morelli , G. A. , & Tronick , E. Z. (1991) . Parenting and child development in the Efe foragers and Lese farmers of Zaire. In M. H. Bornstein (ed.) , *Cultural approaches to parenting* . New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Mosikatsana, T. L. (1995) . Transracial adoptions. *South African Law Journal*, 112 (4), 606 – 628.
- Nyman , R. (1997) . The death of SADWU: The birth of a new organisation. *South African Labour Bulletin*, 20 (2), 34 -38.
- Oliver , J. (1995) . Torn between two Cultures. *Drum*, 211, 15 - 18.
- Plummer , D. L. (1995) . Patterns of racial identity development of African American adolescent males and females. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 21 (2), 168 -181.



- Preston – Whyte , E. (1973) . Race, attitudes and behaviour: The case of domestic employment in white South African homes. *African Studies*, 35 (2), 71 – 89.
- Raphaely , C. (1988) . Heat in the kitchen: Almost 1 million domestic workers comprise a force to be reckoned with. *Finance Week*, 37 (1), 36 -37.
- Russell , M. (1995) . *Parenthood among black migrant workers to the Western Cape*. Pretoria: HSRC Publishers.
- Simon , R. J. & Alstein , H. (1992) . *Adoption, race and identity: From infancy through adolescence*. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Simpkins , D, & Boulton , B., & Cunningham. P. (1990) . Interracial adoption. *Social Work*, 26 (3), 38 – 43.
- Smith , J. A. (1995) . *Rethinking methods in Psychology*. London : Sage Publications.
- Stevenson , H. C. (1995) . Relationship of adolescent perceptions of racial socialisation to racial identity. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 21 (1), 49 - 70.
- Strauss , A. & Corbin , J. (1990) . *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. California: Sage Publications.
- Tomlinson , M. (1997) . Pathways to attachment: The strange situation and culture in the South African context. *Southern African Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 9 (6), 107 - 123.
- Turshen , M. (1991) . *Women and Health in Africa*. Trenton, N.J : Africa World Press.

## APPENDIX I

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

E = Employer

DW = Domestic Worker

A) How long are DW and child living with present E?

B) **Extent** is the **E involved** with the child ?

#### 1. Living

- sleeping
- meals
- leisure
- homework

#### 2. Recreation

- sport
- leisure

#### 3. Discipline

- talking
- physical
- time-out
- denial of privileges

Is there a difference between the ways in which DW and E discipline?

Is this a source of conflict between DW and E?

How is this resolved?

How does the child respond to disciplining from DW?

How does the child respond to disciplining from E?

#### 4. Education

- Choice of school
- financing
- homework
- tuition

#### 5. Decision Making

Who primarily makes decisions about your child

Does the employer play a role in this

Is there conflict about decisions between DW and E with regard to the child ?

How is this resolved?

How does this affect the child?

How does the child feel about this?

6. How would things have been different between DW and the child if involvement from the E was absent?

7. How did it happen that E became so involved with the child?

8. Why does DW think there has been so much involvement from E?

9. How does child respond to this involvement?

10. Has the involvement with E affected the way in which the child responds to DW?

### **C) SUBSYSTEMS**

1. How was DW brought up

2. In DW's culture, how is child expected to behave ( Does child "know his place")

3. Does child's behaviour fit in with DW's expectation?

4. How is involvement from E different to the way in which DW would like to have brought up child?

5. Does child use E's authority against DW?

6. Does child use DW's authority against E?

### **D) DEFINITION OF PARENT**

1. Who does the child see as his/her parent ?

2. What does child call E ?

3. How did this happen ?

4. What does DW call E ?

5. How did this happen ?

6. Who does the child see as his/her family ?

### **E) Family Activities**

1. What activities do DW and child engage in together
2. How comfortable is the child with going to visit extended family who live in the townships
3. How does DW feel about this
4. Would E expect child to go on a family visit with E's family ?
5. How comfortable is child in going with E to visit her family ?
6. How does the DW feel about this ?
7. With whom is the child more comfortable DW and her extended family or E and her family?

### **F) Culture**

1. Is teaching the child about indigenous culture important for the DW
2. How does DW teach the child about traditional culture
3. Does the child speak the vernacular
4. Is it important for the DW that the child speak the vernacular

### **G) Racial Socialization**

1. Do you think of yourself as a black South African
2. Do you want your child to think of him/herself as a black South African
3. Why / Why not ?
4. In racial terms how does your define him/herself racially

### **H) Adaptation of Child**

1. How confident is your child
2. Which relationships in the household contributes to this
3. Are these contributions negative or positive?
4. Does your child have any behaviour problems?

Aggression	Soiling
disobedience	Attention seeking
tantrums	Destructiveness
stealing	Tearfulness
lying	over activity
bedwetting	Restlessness

- 5. Does your child have friends?
- 6. What race are these friends?
- 7. What social class would you say your child is?
- 8. Are his/her friends of the same class?
- 9. How does your child get along with his/her friends?

University of Cape Town